

# I Shall Seal the Heavens

(我欲封天)

Book 2

Cutting Into the Southern Domain

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## Story Description:

Shall Seal the Heavens is currently one of the most popular xianxia stories in China. It is about a failed young scholar named Meng Hao who gets forcibly recruited into a Sect of Immortal Cultivators. In the Cultivation world, the strong prey on the weak, and the law of the jungle prevails. Meng Hao must adapt to survive. And yet, he never forgets the Confucian and Daoist ideals that he grew up studying. This, coupled with his stubborn nature, set him on the path of a true hero. What does it mean to “Seal the Heavens?” This is a secret that you will have to uncover along with Meng Hao!

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

# Chapter 96: Demonic Jade in a Mountain Valley

There's no need to explain what Foundation Establishment means to Cultivators. It is a world-shaking transformation which includes an extension of longevity. Of course, longevity means life, and the lives of Foundation Establishment Cultivators are much more fulfilling than those of the Qi Condensation stage.

There are injuries which will kill someone of the Qi Condensation stage, but can only hurt a powerful Foundation Establishment expert.

Meng Hao walked through the verdant mountains outside the edge of what had once been the State of Zhao, leaving behind the land that had once been his home. He headed toward the Southern Domain.

Even though the State of Zhao had technically been part of the Southern Domain, it was very remote, far, far away from the Southern Domain's center. Given his current Cultivation base, if he went on foot, it could take years to get there.

However, Meng Hao wasn't in a rush. Though he headed in the direction of the Southern Domain, what he was most concerned about at the moment was how to break through to Foundation Establishment and become a powerful expert.

Thinking about how previously, there had only been a few dozen Foundation Establishment Cultivators in the entire State of Zhao, Meng Hao itched with anticipation. He longed to establish his Foundation and then be able to fly through the sky.

"Who knows what dangers I will face in the Southern Domain. Plus, I still have to dispel this poison. I can only do that if I have a more powerful Cultivation base...." Meng Hao's eyes glittered. He knew that with the Qi Cultivation Manual of the Sublime Spirit Scripture, he could establish a Flawless Foundation. That was rare enough in itself, but Meng Hao also possessed Shangguan Xiu's secret formula to create a Perfect Foundation

Pill!

He already had most of the ingredients. With the items he'd obtained from Patriarch Reliance's Immortal's Cave, as well as the copper mirror, he was confident that he could gather together everything necessary to concoct the pill. If he succeeded, he would have a Perfect Foundation which currently only existed in legends in the Cultivation world.

"I wonder... how powerful is a Perfect Foundation?" His eyes shined as he sped forward.

Three months later, Meng Hao was far from where the State of Zhao had previously existed. He had passed through another country of mortals and was now within a vast wilderness. He hadn't seen signs of life for quite some time.

Lonely mountains stretched out as far as the eye could see. They seemed endless. During the day, the sounds of various wild animals could be heard, and the deep blue sky stretched boundlessly. At night, the sky was filled with the soft light of the multitudinous stars and gentle moon, the sight of which enchanted the heart.

Meng Hao stood on a mountain peak, looking out at the world. Its beauty filled his heart, causing it to swell. He started to walk down the mountain.

"Reading ten thousand books, travelling ten thousand roads. It's hard to say how many tens of thousands of kilometers I've travelled so far. Mountains fill the horizon. Everything I've seen and heard fills my heart like an ever-growing sea." His eyes shone brightly.

"In selecting the location for Foundation Establishment, the best thing to do is pick a place with outstanding spiritual energy. That will improve my chances of success. Meng Hao knew that establishing his Foundation would be difficult. Currently, he sped about attempting to find a suitable location. Time passed, another three months.

Meng Hao had now been wandering for six months. During that period of time, he did not practice Cultivation. Having completed the Great Circle of Qi Condensation, he didn't need to. His heart was calm; deep

inside, he knew that he could begin to establish his Foundation at any time he wished.

“For the highest probability of succeeding in establishing my Foundation, I must select a location with dense spiritual energy,” muttered Meng Hao. “That will reduce the chances of making any mistakes.” As he travelled, he would avoid any wild beasts he saw and didn’t instigate any bloody slaughters. The poison in his body had already flared up twice in the past half year. Each time it did, his body was wracked with intense pain, as if a myriad of ants were gnawing at his innards. The first time it had happened, he’d tumbled out of the sky, a three-colored mist seeping out of his body. He had sat with clenched teeth for three days before the pain subsided. Both times the poison had flared up, large amounts of stinking black liquid had oozed out of his body. Any vegetation it touched instantly decayed.

Upon further research he came to the determination that most of the poison had actually been expelled by his body during the flare-ups. Only the poison from the three-colored poison pill remained.

During the half-year, Meng Hao took time to practice with the treasures he had acquired from Patriarch Reliance, for example the Lightning Flag. As of now, he could use it much more effectively than the six months before. Now, he could use it to create a mist ten meters in diameter. If any creatures approached it, it would shoot lightning bolts at it. Its power was greater than that of Foundation Establishment. He had gotten into the habit of using it to protect himself whenever he rested.

As for the good luck charm, Meng Hao couldn’t find any apparent use for the item.

Another month passed. In front of Meng Hao, a series of mountainous valleys appeared. They were filled with suspension bridges. People wearing rough hemp garments and headgear walked to and fro upon the bridges carrying large wicker baskets on their backs.

Seeing this, Meng Hao’s eyes narrowed. This place was a wilderness, with no signs of habitation anywhere. And yet, suddenly some mortals had

appeared.

Their clothing looked different from that worn in the State of Zhao. Meng Hao looked them over, muttering to himself, and was about to leave when suddenly his eyes flickered. He turned to look at one of the seven valleys.

After a moment, the flying sword he was standing on flashed, carrying him directly toward the valley. As he approached, a thick wave of spiritual energy billowed out and hit him in the face. His eyes gleamed. This was the most dense accumulation of spiritual energy that he had seen in the past six months.

The valley was extremely deep and long. Looking down at it from mid-air, Meng Hao couldn't even see its bottom. The only thing he could see was the dense spiritual energy, which roiled out from the deep within the valley. The spiritual energy caused all the living things nearby to grow abundantly and gave the place an otherworldly look.

"There's even more spiritual energy here than there was on the East Mountain of the Reliance Sect." Meng Hao looked down at the misty valley in amazement. It was at this moment that the mist in the valley suddenly roiled. Within Meng Hao's bag of holding, the Demon Sealing Jade quivered. His eyes flickering, he took out the jade slip.

As soon as he pulled it out, a roaring sound filled his head, and a text appeared in his mind.

"An understanding from ancient times, the smelting of a demon, severed by the hand of a of a Demon Sealer. Such a pity; an inch of joss ash upon which descendants can prostrate."

The text appeared suddenly, and then disappeared just as quickly, fading into Meng Hao's mind. Everything returned to normal, but Meng Hao's eyes shined brightly. He gazed down at the mist within the valley, then back at the Demon Sealing Jade.

"Severed by the hand of a Demon Sealer... The Demon Sealing Sect. The ancient jade. A demon... What secrets does this Demon Sealing Jade contain...?" Meng Hao lifted his head up and looked around. It turned out

that many of the mortals on the suspension bridges had caught sight of him. Looks of terror appeared on their faces. One by one, they dropped to their knees and began to kowtow to him.

Suddenly, a piercing whistling sound emerged from one of the other valleys. Two beams of colourful light appeared. Two enormous condors flew out, upon the back of each stood a person.

Each person looked to be about forty years old. They wore robes of complexly interlaced blue and green fabric. Their faces were somewhat dark, and they were very skinny. One of the men had a dark greenish-blue snake coiled around his arm. The little snake's eyes were ghastly, and when it flicked its forked tongue out, a thin mist blew out of his mouth.

The other man had a centipede on his shoulder, slowly rocking back and forth. It was about a foot long, and very colorful, obviously extremely poisonous.

Of the two men, one was of the ninth level of Qi Condensation, the other was at the peak of the eighth level. They did not look very friendly. They came to a stop about three hundred meters away from Meng Hao, looking him over with cold eyes.

Meng Hao's expression was as calm as ever. He put away the Demon Sealing Jade and looked at them. He had seen more than one Cultivator in the State of Zhao with Cultivation bases similar to these people.

As they looked him over, another piercing whistle sounded out. From another of the valleys, a winged, purple toad flew out. It carried a mist along with it as it flew; it seemed this toad had a Cultivation base of the Qi Condensation stage. Sitting cross-legged on its back was an old man.

The old man wore a garment of interlaced red and yellow. His face was painted with totemic symbols that formed a sort of mask. He looked very fierce as he flew out to join the other two in measuring up Meng Hao.

The old man's Cultivation base was extraordinary. He was at the peak of the ninth level of Qi Condensation. Seeing him, the expressions on the faces of the other two changed.

The old man gazed at Meng Hao, frowning as he tried to assess his Cultivation base. "I am the Chief of Spirit Toad Village," he said. "If you're just passing through, Fellow Daoist, please continue onward. Outside Cultivators are not welcome here."

Meng Hao's expression was as calm as ever. The thick spiritual energy here was what he had been searching out for the past half year. If he left, it was impossible to say how long he would have to search to find another similar location.

Normally, he would just forget it and move on, but the strange reaction of the Demon Sealing Jade had piqued his interest. He had no desire to leave.

He said nothing. His right hand flickered in an incantation gesture, and one flying sword after another flew out, instantly forming a Sword Rain of over one hundred flying swords. They spun around, creating a vortex that began to expand outward in all directions.

The expressions of the old man on the toad, as well as the others, instantly changed. Meng Hao pointed down toward one of the valleys, and the swords shot forth. Banging sounds rang out as they slammed into a cliff face and carved out a simple Immortal's Cave.

"Please allow me to hole up here for a few months," said Meng Hao coolly. Not giving them another look, he shot toward the Immortal's Cave.

The frightening image of the hundred or more flying swords caused the toad geezer frown. The other two Cultivators looked hesitant.

The man with the snake coiled around his arm glared at Meng Hao as he made to enter the Immortal's Cave. He lifted his arm up, and the Spirit Snake turned into a black blur as it flew toward Meng Hao.

As it approached, a dark, cold look appeared in Meng Hao's eyes.

# Chapter 97: Cultivation Breakthrough in a Mountain Valley

Before Meng Hao could even make a move, the dark bluish-green Spirit Snake was already about ten meters away from him. Suddenly, it stopped in mid-air and let out a shrill shriek, as if it could sense something terrible on Meng Hao's person. It began to tremble, then shot backward in retreat, not daring to come even a bit closer.

Suddenly, a three-colored mist emerged from the top of Meng Hao's head. It transformed into a demonic face with an enigmatic expression of both weeping and laughter. It spun around Meng Hao's head, then let out an intangible shriek which shot toward the Spirit Snake.

The Spirit Snake let out a miserable cry when the intangible shriek slammed into it. Its body instantly began to rot. It transformed into a coagulation of blood which then splashed to the ground. Upon seeing this, the old man's expression changed. The two other Cultivators gasped, looks of astonishment on their faces.

Meng Hao also looked on in astonishment, his heart thumping.

The three-colored mist was the poison in his body; it had flared up twice in the past half year, but this was the first time it had taken on a magical form and emerged from his body of its own volition. The poison was clearly incredibly mysterious; it could sense other poisons and wouldn't permit them near, as if this host belonged to it alone.

Over the past months, Meng Hao had come to be convinced that during the previous two outbreaks of poison, the other two poisons from the three great Sects had been completely expelled.

It seemed they were not as powerful as the three-colored poison, and had been forced out of his body by it. Seeing the death of the Spirit Snake enabled Meng Hao to finally understand how powerful Lord Revelation's three-colored poison really was.

Of course, the three people he faced didn't know anything about that.



They looked down at Meng Hao, fear written on their faces. The Cultivator who had just lost his Spirit Snake shot backward at high speed, blood seeping out of his mouth. He looked at Meng Hao with astonished fear.

“So, the Fellow Daoist also practices Poison Cultivation....” The old man on the toad, who was at the ninth level of Qi Condensation, stood and saluted Meng Hao respectfully. “Since that is the case, please feel free to stay here. But, there is something strange about this valley. It has thick spiritual energy, and every full moon, the mist erupts and fills the entire valley.” His eyes flashed as he spoke.

“Thanks for the warning,” said Meng Hao, his face expressionless. His body flickered, and he entered the Immortal’s Cave. A large stone he had carved out fell in place to seal the cave shut.

Outside, everything was quiet. The toad geezer’s eyes flashed as he looked at the other two men. They were all silent for a moment. Then, they patted their respective Spirit beasts and flew off toward another of the valleys. There, four more Cultivators were gathered.

All of them were at the eighth level of Qi Condensation and wore long gowns of interlaced green and blue. They sat on an enormous black boulder, which pulsed with a dim light. When the light appeared, the boulder seemed to become somewhat transparent. Inside could be glimpsed the skeleton of a two-headed bird.

When the toad geezer and the others arrived, the four men opened their eyes.

“That outsider is a Poison Cultivator,” said the man who had lost the Spirit Snake, his voice filled with hatred. Venomous rage radiated from his eyes. “I’m not sure how much he saw, but he refused to leave.”

“This complicates things...” said one of the four men sitting cross-legged, frowning. He was a pale-faced middle-aged man. “What is the level of his Cultivation base?”

“The peak of the ninth level of Qi Condensation!” said the toad geezer calmly. He wasn’t mistaken: although Meng Hao could easily pass into the thirteenth level of Qi Condensation, when he did, he was cut off from

heaven and earth. Therefore, he usually remained at the peak of the ninth level.

“His Cultivation base is very refined, but if we attack together, he’ll be dead for sure,” said the Cultivator who had lost his Spirit Snake. “If we let him stay here, he’ll figure out what’s going on. He might not have any suspicions now, but the next full moon is in half a month. When it comes time to pull out the red rope, he’ll definitely know what’s happening. He’s a Poison Cultivator, how could he not be interested? I say, let’s attack together and exterminate him.”

Some of the others seemed to hesitate. After all, Meng Hao was at the peak of the ninth level. At the moment, only the toad geezer was strong enough to stand up to him. None of the others were powerful enough. If they all fought together, they might be able to win, but some of them would most likely die. Hesitating, they looked at the toad geezer.

“We don’t need to do anything. I told him that strange things happen in the valley on the full moon. Most likely he will go to see for himself. We won’t need to attack. The miasma that accompanies the red rope will kill him. If he doesn’t come out... well, the miasma covers everything anyway. Either way, he’s dead! Our ancestral Spirit Mountain Three Villages cannot be looked upon by outsiders. Any who do so... must die.” His eyes gleamed as he spoke. The other six people nodded their heads.

Meanwhile, Meng Hao sat down cross-legged in the Immortal’s cave. The dense spiritual energy surrounding him caused his Cultivation base to thrum. As he began doing Tu Na breathing exercises, his boundless Core Sea seemed to begin to consolidate.

He breathed deeply, lifting his head and looking at the large stone which he’d used to seal the Immortal’s Cave. His eyes flashed, and the two wooden swords appeared, hovering at his side. He lifted his right hand and waved it in the air. A talisman appeared, floating in front of him. He sent it to hang on the large rock.

This talisman had been acquired from Wang Tengfei. He wasn’t sure how powerful it was, and had never used it. But considering that he’d

taken it from Wang Tengfei, it couldn't be a common item.

"It seems these people have some secrets they don't want outsiders to know about. If they leave me alone, then I'll leave them alone. But if they disturb my Cultivation...." Meng Hao's eyes gleamed. His expression was calm as he pulled Shangguan Xiu's turtle shell out of his bag of holding, the one that contained the details about the Perfect Foundation. He looked at it, frowning.

"To concoct a Perfect Foundation Pill, I need a pill furnace," murmured Meng Hao to himself. "I got that from Shangguan Xiu. But it also requires a bit of skill in pill concoction. Without such skill, the chances of a misstep are much higher. These medicinal herbs are extremely valuable. If I made a mistake, I could duplicate more herbs, but the cost would be exorbitant." He had no skill in pill concoction, which was somewhat frustrating.

After some time passed, Meng Hao pulled out the various herbs required to make the minor pills which were part of the ingredient list. Then he produced the copper mirror and began to duplicate some of them. A few hours later, he had spent a huge amount of Spirit Stones. Despite having a mountain of Spirit Stones, if he kept going at this pace, he would once again be destitute.

"These are just minor pills.... Concocting the Perfect Foundation Pill has two major steps. The first step is to concoct seven different minor pills, each of which has a unique function. The second step is to take those seven pills and melt them together to concoct the Perfect Foundation Pill. If I'm missing even one minor pill, I have no way to succeed! Of the seven minor pills, Shangguan Xiu had concocted two. Now five remain.... I've never concocted pills before, what happens if I have to try dozens of times to succeed? If that happens, then I definitely won't have enough Spirit Stones. That could even affect my ability to reach Foundation Establishment. Pill concoction... If I can develop enough skill in pill concoction, then I shouldn't have any problems." Meng Hao frowned as he studied some basic Milky Way City pill concoction techniques. Unfortunately, trying to teach yourself such techniques is not easy, and

can take a very long time. Furthermore, some of the techniques were not common. Many pill concoction masters had secret techniques that weren't told to outsiders. Such techniques were often closely guarded Sect secrets.

"The best method would be to concoct the Perfect Foundation Pill first, then establish the Foundation. In that way, there would be no need for haste in concocting the pill. That was the route taken by Shangguan Xiu. But..." His eyes glittered. "That method seems suitable, but if I don't reach Foundation Establishment, I would have to face too many dangers. That is why Shangguan Xiu ended up dying. Otherwise, I would never have been able to kill him. Therefore this method... cannot be used!" He was silent for a moment, and then his eyes filled with determination.

"Regardless of anything, I must first establish my Foundation. If I can concoct the Perfect Foundation Pill later, then it won't be too late. The Perfect Foundation Pill can repair the cracks in the Dao Pillars made by the Heavens. Therefore... a Flawless Foundation is fine!" Meng Hao gritted his teeth. Despite his intense desire to concoct the Perfect Foundation pill, it was not practical to do so right now.

"I can only enter the Southern Domain if I have first reached Foundation Establishment. Then I can figure out a way to dispel this poison. As a Qi Condensation Cultivator, that is virtually impossible." Having made up his mind, he didn't waste any more time thinking. He put away the turtle shell and the medicinal herbs, then pulled out a Foundation Establishment Pill and began to duplicate it.

He was of the Great Circle of Qi Condensation, and was feeling very confident in his ability to break through to Foundation Establishment. However, to play it safe, he decided to use the power of the Foundation Establishment Pill.

Looking down at the five Foundation Establishment Pills in front of him, he took a breath and slapped his bag of holding. A small flag flew out. Lightning curled around it as it flew through the air. Meng Hao flickered some incantation gestures, and the flag stabbed into the ground without any assistance from Meng Hao's Cultivation base. It sucked in some of the surrounding spiritual energy, then transformed into a fog which enveloped

the Immortal's Cave. It spread out ten meters in all directions, surrounding Meng Hao.

“After consuming a Foundation Establishment Pill, my body will turn stiff and I won't be able to move.” He eyed the mist created by the little flag. “With the Lightning Flag here, though, I will be protected. No one will be able to disturb me. Considering the current level of my Cultivation base, the paralysis will be relatively short in duration.”

Of the treasures he had acquired from Patriarch Reliance, the Demon Sealing Jade was the most mysterious. But his favorite, other than the mountain of Spirit Stones, was this little flag. As for the good luck charm, he still hadn't been able to figure out anything about it. He would study it further after he reached Foundation Establishment.

Taking a deep breath, he picked up a pill and put it into his mouth. It dissolved instantly, and boundless spiritual energy shook his body. He trembled. It was not his first time consuming a Foundation Establishment Pill. But every time he did, he felt as if he was a tiny boat floating amidst massive, crashing waves. A roaring sound filled his head. He continued to circulate his Cultivation base.

Boundless spiritual energy flowed through Meng Hao, pouring into his Core Sea, causing it to roar and churn. The Demonic Core within him suddenly seemed as if it were about to turn into a Dao Pillar.

Once the Dao Pillar appeared, Meng Hao would have broken through from Qi Condensation and crossed the threshold into the true realm of Cultivation... Foundation Establishment.

Once in the Foundation Establishment stage, he would never again be mortal. He would truly be upon the path of Cultivation, and would never again be a part of the mortal world. To fall back would indicate that he didn't deserve to exist in the Cultivation world!

He would be a boat sailing against the current.

It can be summed up by the phrase, “Move forward, or you'll fall behind.”

# Chapter 98: Valley of the Red Rope

Time slowly went on. Soon half a month passed. On one particular night, the full moon was especially bright, outshining most of the stars. It hung up in the sky, filling the land with gentle silvery, light.

It seemed to shine especially brightly upon the group of valleys, especially the valley where Meng Hao was located. As it shined down onto the mist, it began to seethe, slowly spinning into what looked like a vortex.

Outside the valley, the seven Cultivators were waiting, their eyes shining. They stared at the mist within the valley, expressions of anticipation on their faces.

“The hour has arrived...” said the toad geezer, his voice low. Even as his words issued out from his mouth, a gurgling sound could be heard from within the mist.

The sound was indistinct, but when it reached the ears, it stabbed to the heart. Cracking sounds echoed out, and the mist within the valley roiled.

Time passed. The gurgling sound became clearer. Amidst further cracking sounds, the mist turned and turned until it appeared to be a giant whirlpool. The edges of the whirlpool of mist seemed to be able to pierce into the surrounding cliff walls, causing them to melt. Liquified rock poured down the cliff faces.

At the same, a red rope appeared from within the vortex. It was as thick as a person’s arm, and was as red as if it had been dyed with the blood of countless people. A droning sound filled the air as the vortex and the rope both spun. As soon as the rope appeared, the seven men seemed vitalized.

The toad geezer’s eyes gleamed. He bit down on his tongue and spit out some blood, at the same time flickering an incantation and producing a black metal fragment from within his bag of holding.

The other six men did the same thing, spitting out blood and producing fragmented pieces of black metal. They seemed familiar with the process, as if they had done this before.

The blood entered the vortex, and apparently because of this, the vortex suddenly stopped rotating. The rope, however, did not.

The black chips from the seven men spun about in the air and then formed together into a black broadsword.

The sword floated above the valley, pointing down toward the red rope, which then ceased rotating.

With a low shout, the toad geezer flew forward to grab the red rope with both hands. He gripped it without hesitation, despite the fact that it felt wet, as if it was coated with blood. The six other men appeared behind him, pooling their strength together to pull on the rope.

A thunderous roar filled the area as they did. The rope slowly emerged ten meters from within the vortex. As it did, a black-colored Qi poured out to fill the area. Eventually it reached the point where Meng Hao's cave was located it, submerging it.

"At one hundred meters we got the Jade Spirit Stone. Two hundred meters in we got the toxic miasma. Last time we pulled out three hundred meters and got the stone-sealed beast. Today, we will go all out and reach five hundred meters!"

"Right! According to the ancient records of our Clan, if we can pull out five hundred meters, it will open the first seal, and the Clan's ancestral spirit will awaken. It will form into a Poison Foundation, and our Cultivation bases can ascend another level!" The eyes of the seven men gleamed, and they heaved on the rope.

The bottom of the vortex couldn't be seen; there was nothing but blackness, making it seem as if the red rope had no end. Every tug on the rope caused the surrounding valley to quake. The ground rippled, as if the end of the rope were plugged into the very core of the earth.

Shocking booms sounded out as they continued to pull. More toxic miasma billowed out as three hundred meters of rope appeared. Suddenly, a stench like that of rotten fish poured out from the depths of the vortex.

It seemed this stench had never appeared before; the seven men's faces

changed. However, the area immediately around the rope seemed to naturally be protected from the stench and miasma. Their faces pale, the seven men gritted their teeth and heaved once again on the rope.

Three-hundred fifty meters. Three-hundred eighty meters. Four hundred meters!

The men panted. They had expended seventy to eighty percent of the power of their Cultivation bases. Without hesitation, they popped medicinal pills into their mouths and tugged once again on the rope. Five of the seven men coughed up blood. Soon, only the toad geezer, and the other man who was at the ninth level of Qi Condensation, held out. They gritted their teeth, unable to stop their bodies from trembling.

“I’m at my limit....” said the toad geezer with a roar. He bit the tip of his tongue and spit out some more blood. As he did, a black beam of light shot out from the edge of the valley. It transformed into an enormous toad, which clamped its mouth down onto the red rope. As it bit down, its body began to wither, but it held fast and pulled.

Next, a centipede shot out, along with several human-sized spiders, summoned by the men to pull the rope. Even the huge boulder with the bird skeleton inside flew out. Its glow seemed to aid in pulling the red rope.

Four-hundred thirty meters. Four-hundred sixty meters. Four-hundred ninety meters!

The rotten stench grew stronger, seemingly carrying the stink of a corpse as it filled the valley. It seemed the rope would soon be pulled out five hundred meters. A shrill shriek came out of the whirlpool, piercing the air with wickedness.

The shriek grew more and more intense, seemingly filled with hope. Except... there were still three meters to go before the five-hundred meter mark was reached. The poison beasts summoned by the seven men exploded one by one, unable to keep going. As they died, the faces of the seven men grew pale. The rope suddenly slipped out of their hands and was sucked back into the whirlpool. Had they not released it, they would



have been pulled along with it into the vortex.

The men watched silently as the rope was pulled back inside.

“Forget it. We’ll try again next month.”

“Yes. The day will come when we will pull out five hundred meters of rope. I will be making a breakthrough in my Cultivation base soon. Once I reach the ninth level of Qi Condensation, we will definitely be able to succeed.”

“That outsider is of the ninth level....” said one of the men suddenly.

“We don’t need to make things more complicated. That outsider is probably dead already, killed by the miasma. Even if he was at the Foundation Establishment stage, he couldn’t withstand it unless he was of our bloodline.”

The seven discussed the matter a bit further, then dispersed.

The mist continued to roil in the valley for three days before finally settling down. The spiritual energy in the area gradually grew thick again, and the miasma dissipated.

Within the Immortal’s Cave, Meng Hao watched with cold eyes. Surrounded by the arcing field of electricity, he had seen clearly everything that had happened during the three days. As for the miasma, the Lightning Flag made short work of, and Meng Hao remained safe from any harm.

“They think I’m dead. That’s good.” Meng Hao’s eyes glittered.

“I’m not sure if it’s because of the Sublime Spirit Scripture or perhaps the Demonic Core... Establishing my Foundation is turning out to be very difficult.” He lowered his head and picked up another Foundation Establishment Pill. He frowned. As of now, he was a bit suspicious. Was the Cultivation method in the Sublime Spirit Scripture the real method? Or had Patriarch Reliance changed it in according with his own Demonic Cultivation practices.... There was no way to know. Meng Hao’s eyes shone with determination as he popped the Foundation Establishment Pill into his mouth and closed his eyes to meditate.

His Core Sea roared violently, seething and churning as it coagulated. It seemed to be forming a Dao Pillar. But to do so was incredibly difficult. Even with the Foundation Establishment Pill, he wasn't able to succeed.

It can be said that Foundation Establishment is the first true hurdle that must be crossed on the path to real Cultivation. A Foundation Establishment Pill can only increase the probability of success by about ten percent.

Even though he had reached the Great Circle of Qi Condensation, and his latent talent had been increased, it still was not an easy matter.

Time slipped by. In the blink of an eye, another three months passed. Each full moon during that time, the seven men again made attempts at pulling out the red rope. More than a few times, they came to Meng Hao's Immortal's Cave to try to get his corpse.

But the cave was being protected by Patriarch Reliance's Lightning Flag. A few insignificant Qi Condensation Cultivators didn't have the slightest chance of getting inside. They started to wonder whether or not Meng Hao was actually dead.

Another three months passed, half a year of hard work. They hadn't even seen a trace of Meng Hao. At this point, they were mostly certain that he was dead.

As for Meng Hao, even he wasn't sure how many Foundation Establishment pills he consumed during the half year. Every time he failed, he would take another pill. Toward the end, he even tried consuming two pills at one time.

The poison flared up twice during the half year. Thankfully, Meng Hao was prepared. He dealt with it, then continued on in his attempts to break through to Foundation Establishment.

In this excruciating fashion, another month passed. One night, Meng Hao sat there, a roaring sound rising in his mind. Only Meng Hao could sense this roaring sound; it sounded like claps of thunder in his mind.

Within his body, his golden Core Sea let out an unprecedented roaring

sound, and a gold light filled his body. It seemed as if he himself were made of gold.

He sat there meditating, his eyes closed. As his Core Sea emitted its thunderous roar, he focused everything on forming the Dao Pillar and breaking through into Foundation Establishment. Within the Core Sea, the Demonic Core rotated rapidly. It looked as if it might melt.

During the past year, this had happened frequently. Meng Hao had come to understand clearly that if he didn't have this Demonic Core inside of him, it would be much easier to establish his Foundation. It was the Demonic Core that was making things so difficult. Coupled with the fact that he had completed the Great Circle of Qi Condensation, it meant that achieving Foundation Establishment was much harder for him than anyone else in the world.

Every time the Dao Pillar was beginning to form, it would be disturbed by the Demonic Core, and wouldn't coalesce. At the moment, golden light shined out from Meng Hao's Core Sea. The waters began to congeal, slowly solidifying into a massive Dao Pillar. But then, the Demonic Core began spinning, causing the Core Sea, which had just moments before been calm, to seethe. The Dao Pillar once again began to fall apart.

"Again!" Meng Hao's eyes burned. Without hesitation, he lifted up his hand and swallowed three Foundation Establishment Pills.

# Chapter 99: Foundation Establishment!

“The Demonic Core just keeps moving, and that prevents the Core Sea from entering Foundation Establishment. It just can’t form the Dao Pillar.... I must form the Dao Pillar! I must reach Foundation Establishment! I must stop the Demonic Core from moving. And that requires more Spiritual Energy!”

The three Foundation Establishment Pills dissolved in his mouth, and a shocking amount of spiritual power erupted. It poured into Meng Hao’s Core Sea, which moments ago had been in the midst of condensing, but was then interrupted by the Demonic Core.

The lashing power caused the Core Sea to shine with blinding golden light. The Demonic Core, which seemed as if it would never stop spinning, suddenly began to slow. The spiritual energy within the Core Sea seemed endless. A roaring sound could be heard which suppressed any indication that the Demonic Core would begin to spin furiously again.

It stopped, unmoving. Popping sounds rang out from within the Core Sea and echoed throughout Meng Hao’s body. His entire Core Sea seemed as if it were freezing over. In the space of a few breaths, it suddenly became completely solid.

At that moment, it seemed almost as if Meng Hao’s life had ended. His breathing slowed, and his body began to shake. His eyes shined, and he took a deep breath as the Qi Condensation Manual of the Sublime Spirit Scripture appeared in his mind. The solidified Core Sea began to slowly shrink.

It grew smaller and smaller, changing into a diamond-shaped crystalline rock which contained the Demonic Core. More spiritual energy from the Foundation Establishment Pills poured down, and slowly the Core Sea emerged again.

Even as it replenished itself, it began to shrink again upon itself to form an additional diamond-shaped lump of crystalline rock. Then, more spiritual energy poured in, and the process began again.

Meng Hao knew the process would take a long time, and would require a lot of spiritual energy, which was why he had selected this valley. He smacked his bag of holding and began to consume more medicinal pills.

Over and over again, his Core Sea replenished itself and then solidified into the diamond-shaped crystalline rock. Meng Hao lost track of time.

One month. Two months. Three months... six months....

Spring passed and autumn arrived, then the cold of winter. A year had passed since Meng Hao entered the Immortal's Cave to practice secluded meditation. Every full moon during that year, the seven Cultivators would come to pull on the red rope.

Their best effort resulted in pulling out four-hundred ninety-nine meters. They were never able to pull out the final one meter. As time passed, the seven men noticed that the spiritual energy of heaven and earth in the area seemed to have been reduced.

Of course, it was being absorbed by Meng Hao, but they didn't know that, and couldn't figure out why it was happening. They searched the area, but came up with nothing. They didn't even think to connect the phenomenon to Meng Hao. A year had passed, which in their minds was evidence that he had died.

The man who had lost his Spirit Snake that year would often look toward Meng Hao's Immortal's Cave with a cold sneer. The death of his Spirit Snake had left him with a deep hatred of Meng Hao.

He tried several times to break into the cave to collect Meng Hao's treasures from his corpse. But he was never able to succeed.

Time passed, another half year. Meng Hao had now been in secluded meditation for a year and a half. One late night, his Core Sea was again solidifying into a diamond-shaped crystalline rock. This was the one-hundredth piece.

A roaring could be heard, and the hundred diamond-shaped rocks suddenly began to fuse together. Slowly, they formed into a transparent, crystalline Dao Pillar!

## Foundation Establishment Dao Pillar!

As soon as the Dao Pillar appeared, Meng Hao's agitated breathing calmed down. His eyes grew dim, and the functioning of his internal organs slowed. He was motionless; even his blood seemed to stop circulating. His entire person seemed to be in a state of suspended animation.

Everything was completely still.

Meng Hao knew that this was the second phase in the process of reaching Foundation Establishment. This was Recuperation.

He sat there cross-legged, his mind echoing with the Qi Condensation Manual of the Sublime Spirit Scripture. He sank into a very strange state. Even though his blood and flesh did not seem to be undergoing any change, in actuality, they were. They were changing in a way that made it much easier to absorb spiritual power.

His Qi passageways enlarged. No spiritual power circulated through them. However, they grew tougher, firmer, and smoother. His bones were different as well, even crystalline in some places. He was transforming, becoming something other than mortal. These changes shook his entire body. His hair grew much longer and he became taller than before.

There was no Core Sea within him anymore, but rather, a golden Dao Pillar. It was a flat, circular platform that did not shine, but rather seemed dark and somewhat lonely. It floated in the place where the Core Sea had once existed. If you looked closely, you could see Meng Hao's Demonic Core, right in the center of the Dao Pillar.

It sat there motionless, completely and perfectly fused with the Dao Pillar.

His heart did not beat, his blood did not flow. His Qi passageways were motionless, and his Qi had disappeared. Meng Hao sat there looking withered up. His Dao Pillar was in a similar state. All of his Qi had been sucked away.

He sat that way for another half of a year. Breaking through into

Foundation Establishment had taken him two full years. Others would be shocked if they knew of this. Generally speaking, the longest amount of time a Cultivator needs to reach Foundation Establishment is half a year, often it will take only a few months. The amount of spiritual energy required was not immense either, nothing close to what Meng Hao had needed. The amount of time and spiritual energy wasted by Meng Hao was far and above the norm.

Toward the end of the last half-year, Meng Hao's Dao Pillar began to tremble and vibrate. This was the first thing that began to move within his body. Next, his heart began to beat. All of his systems kicked into motion. His blood began to flow, his Qi passageways began to operate, and his Qi filled with signs of life force. Slowly, he began to awaken as if from sleep.

Soon, the Dao Pillar began to shine brightly with golden light, which grew more and more intense. His heart thumped so wildly it seemed as if it might burst out of his body. Its sound filled the Immortal's Cave. Every beat of his heart sent blood flowing throughout his body. His Qi billowed out, and it seemed he would soon be filled with power and would be able to open his eyes at any moment.

This power was not to be used simply to open the eyes, but rather to awaken his body. It moved about within him, growing stronger, imbuing his body with strength!

It was at this moment that the Dao Pillar within him emitted a thunderous roar. A powerful spiritual power burst out from it, blasting out into Meng Hao's Qi passageways, flesh, blood and bones. Like the life of spring which causes a withered tree to sprout, his body awakened. His Qi grew stronger, and massive amounts of filth exuded from his pores, replaced by a fragrant aroma which arose from him. His long hair floated around him. He looked completely different than he had half a year ago.

As the spiritual power emanated out, his Qi passageways filled with power, and his blood flowed faster. His heartbeat caused the Immortal's Cave to tremble, and his eyes... it was at this moment that his eyes flashed open.

A blinding light shot out from within them. If a Qi Condensation Cultivator saw it, their mind would reel and their Cultivation base would be damaged.

The moment he opened his eyes, the spiritual energy in the valley was swept up. It was as if Meng Hao had become a black hole, swallowing up all of the spiritual energy in sight. It was absorbed through his pores and into the Dao Pillar, which grew brighter and brighter. Meng Hao's Qi grew even more powerful.

His heart thumped as the feeling of power blossomed in his mind. He knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that by simply lifting his hand, he could cause the entire Immortal's Cave to collapse. This was a confidence based on his physical body, his mind, and his Cultivation base.

The Spiritual Sense in his mind grew larger. Because of what he had experienced in completing the Great Circle of Qi Condensation, his Spiritual Sense leapt to up to a higher level. At the moment it was far more powerful than that of the average Foundation Establishment stage Cultivator.

In fact, his Spiritual Sense completely exceeded that which a Cultivator should have at the early Foundation Establishment stage. It was actually equal to that of the middle Foundation Establishment stage.

And to Foundation Establishment Cultivators, Spiritual Sense was everything!

Meng Hao's breathing echoed out. The spiritual energy of heaven and earth poured into him, and the Dao Pillar grew more and more bright. Soon, his entire body shined with golden light.

The power of Foundation Establishment Cultivators far exceeds that of Qi Condensation Cultivators. By moving his mind, he could see everything within five hundred meters as if it were within his own heart. This... was Spiritual Sense!

A Cultivator at the beginning Foundation Establishment stage could normally only cast Spiritual Sense two hundred meters ahead.



“The beginning Foundation Establishment stage....” said Meng Hao slowly. As his voice echoed out, his face shone with vigor. His eyes glowed, and he breathed deeply, feeling the power of the spiritual energy emitted by the Dao Pillar. His was a hundred times stronger than the power he could utilize half a year ago when at the peak of the thirteenth level of Qi Condensation.

Of course, that difference of one hundred times was not in comparison to the ninth level of Qi Condensation, but rather the thirteenth. To Meng Hao, this was a complete and utter change.

This was why Foundation Establishment Cultivators could so easily wipe the ground with Qi Condensation Cultivators. The Core Sea of Qi Condensation is congealed a hundred times to form the Foundation Establishment Dao Pillar. The change that Meng Hao had experienced this night sent his power leaping upward. It was without comparison!

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# Chapter 100: Blade against Flawlessness

When Meng Hao sent out his Spiritual Sense, he started to get the feeling that he was cut off from heaven and earth. He was familiar with this sensation; it was the same type of feeling he got when he was in the tenth level of Qi Condensation, or the thirteenth. Although now, the feeling was even stronger, as if the Heavens did not tolerate his Cultivation at all. And yet, along with the disapproval, he felt the strength of a different state. It seemed as if despite the fact that the Heavens did not tolerate it, and this state was rejected by all creation... it fought back, and because of that, was even more powerful.

That resistance came, not from Meng Hao, but from the Dao Pillar and the spiritual energy inside of him!

After feeling the resistance of the Heavens, Meng Hao quickly determined its source.... not a bit of the spiritual energy of heaven and earth he had absorbed into his body escaped back out. Furthermore, none could be absorbed in. No cycle could be created with heaven and earth, which was not permitted!

At the same time, because the spiritual energy was not emitting from him, he was able to vaguely make out some strange, immaterial vestiges. Were he able to grab ahold of them, he would instantly become even more powerful.

These vestiges were not permitted by the Heavens, so only Cultivators who were rejected could see them and gain enlightenment regarding them.

Although Meng Hao wasn't aware of it, in the Cultivation world, these vestiges were called Dao Taboos! Every Cultivator who reached the Foundation Establishment stage could sense them.

At the same moment as Meng Hao began to sense the Dao Taboos, something shook his body. A cracking sound rang out as a fissure appeared on his Dao Pillar. When this happened, Meng Hao coughed up a mouthful of blood, and he was ripped out of that special state.

Vast amounts of spiritual energy poured out of the crack in the Dao Pillar. Meng Hao was powerless to stop it from happening; his body was once again connected to heaven and earth.

Although the spiritual energy rushing out of him could not really compare to the amount he had absorbed, he was now back in a cycle with heaven and earth. The strange vestiges he had just been able to sense were no longer there. He was no longer rejected by the heaven and earth, but had been accepted, and was now part of them.

A flash of weakness appeared in his heart. Meng Hao lifted his head, his vision piercing through to the outside of the Immortal's cave. As he looked at the sky outside, his eyes shone with an unprecedented brightness.

This was a Flawless Foundation with one crack. In this aspect, Meng Hao was actually better than most. With a Cracked Foundation, he would be much weaker, and with a Fractured Foundation, there would be even more cracks, and he would be significantly less powerful.

"As long as there is a crack," murmured Meng Hao, "it is not perfect, and thus, the Heavens can accept it..." His eyes shined brightly.

"Because the Dao Pillars have cracks, no matter what level I reach in my Cultivation, there will always be absorption and diffusion. Do I cultivate in this way for myself... or for the Heavens?" Meng Hao was silent for a while. The question was really too profound for a Foundation Establishment Cultivator to be able to contemplate.

However, since Meng Hao had studied the Qi Condensation Manual of the Sublime Spirit Scripture, and because he knew of the method to achieve a Perfect Foundation, he contemplated matters that normally only someone of the Spirit Severing Stage could comprehend.

The moment that Meng Hao reached the Foundation Establishment stage, it was late at night outside. The seven Cultivators outside watched the spiritual energy churning back and forth, and then looked toward where Meng Hao was within the valley.

"What happened?"

“Why is all the spiritual energy being sucked in that direction?” Muttering like this, the seven of them rushed forward. However, as they approached, they were forced to come to a halt, their bodies trembling. Their spiritual energy felt unstable, as if it might be ripped out of their body at any moment. They stood there in shock, uncertain of what exactly was happening.

To these people, Foundation Establishment was something very remote. They couldn't possibly imagine that someone had reached that stage in this very valley.

In their shock, they didn't dare to proceed further. They stood there, making various speculations, eventually coming to the conclusion that something strange was happening because of the valley itself. Because they couldn't approach, guessing was the best thing they could do. There was no way to prove or disprove anything.

“I can sense that there is some immense power in the valley,” said the toad geezer, taking in a deep breath and narrowing his eyes. “It's something that far, far exceeds us.”

“Too bad we can't get any closer. Just what happened, exactly? I feel like if I approach any further, the spiritual energy within my body will get sucked out....”

“There have been a lot of strange things happening to the spiritual energy over the past two years. Now another thing is happening....” The seven of them exchanged glances, then grew silent, their hearts filled with various speculations.

Meanwhile, within the cave, Meng Hao lifted his head up, his eyes shining. If he hadn't been able to glimpse the Perfect Foundation at all, then it wouldn't have mattered. But, having felt it briefly, only to have it taken away and his power reduced, made him desire it even more intensely.

“The Perfect Foundation....” His eyes flickered and he stood up. He flicked his sleeve, and the mist in front of him rippled, then coalesced into a small flag, which came to rest in his hand. He glanced at it, then spat out

some spiritual energy, which covered over it, turning it into a black beam of light which entered his mouth.

During Qi Condensation, Meng Hao could only passively use the flag. But now that he was in Foundation Establishment, he could refine and wield it in even more ways.

Looking pleased, Meng Hao took a moment to feel himself out. His eyes glittered.

“With the Qi Condensation Manual of the Sublime Spirit Scripture, a second Core Sea can be formed. When the second Core Sea moves from Qi Condensation to Foundation Establishment, it can improve the quality of one’s Foundation Establishment. For me, though it won’t really make much of a difference. However.... I might as well do it, just in case.” His eyes shining, he sat back down cross-legged and visualized the Qi Condensation Manual of the Sublime Spirit Scripture. Several hours later, his eyes snapped open. A roaring sound filled his body. Looking inside of himself, he saw that outside of his Dao Pillar was a new area, a vast golden sea. This was Meng Hao’s second Core Sea.

Having completed this task, he raised hand. The large rock which had sealed his Immortal’s Cave exploded into pieces, which then turned into ash. Meng Hao shot outside, turning into a blur of light that shot into the air. He came to a stop, floating in mid-air.

He looked back at the Immortal’s Cave, a smile on his face. Back when he was in the Qi Condensation stage, if he lifted his finger the way he had just now, it would have been incapable of shattering rock. But as of now, it was a simple matter to do so.

“The gap between Qi Condensation and Foundation Establishment is like the difference between the sky and the land,” said Meng Hao to himself. “It really is true. However, I should be even more powerful. Sadly, my Dao Pillar was cracked by an invisible blade... that is the life of a Cultivator. There is nothing to be done about it. However, if I can repair the Dao Pillar, then I can establish a Perfect Foundation. To do that, I must first concoct a Perfect Foundation Pill. My biggest question, though, is...

what is this symbol...?” His gaze had fallen onto his right hand. There, on the back of his hand, was a strange, glowing magical symbol which was slowly fading. It didn’t exist on his skin, but rather, inside of him. Looking at it, Meng Hao got the feeling that it had existed in there for a very long time.

This was the first time he had seen it, and he had no idea why it had appeared along with Foundation Establishment.

The symbol faded away, and Meng Hao frowned. It didn’t give him any feeling of danger. In fact, it seemed somewhat familiar. He thought about it for a while, but couldn’t come up with any clues as to its nature. He put it aside in his mind and then looked around.

He was surrounded by mist, which completely covered his body and would completely conceal him from any onlookers. At the moment, he hovered in mid-air, but he knew that if he wished, he could fly by simply moving forward.

Having completely set aside the matter of the strange symbol, Meng Hao began to consider why flight is not possible in the Qi Condensation stage. “True flight is not possible during Qi Condensation because the body doesn’t contain enough spiritual energy. Therefore, the body cannot be supported in the air. Flight is only capable with assistance from magical items. However, the spiritual energy within the body during the Foundation Establishment stage is more than a hundred times that of the Qi Condensation stage. Because so much spiritual energy has been coalesced into a Dao Pillar, the body can be supported in the air, and can actually fly.”

“There are a total of nine Dao Pillars which appear throughout the Foundation Establishment stage. Three pillars signify the peak of the beginning level, six pillars are the peak of the middle level, and nine pillars complete the circle. Right now, I have one pillar....” Meng Hao looked at the mist filling the area, and his eyes flickered. His body turned into a prismatic beam as he shot further downward into the valley.

“This place provoked a reaction from the Demon Sealing Jade all those

years ago. Back then, my Cultivation base wasn't powerful enough to make it safe to search for some answers. But now.... I need to be careful, but I think my latent talent and power are enough to go look for some clues." Eyes shining, he shot through the mist. The two wooden swords appeared, whistling as they circled about around him.

Now that he was at Foundation Establishment, the two swords felt somewhat different. However, he didn't take the time to examine them closely. Instead, he shot down through the mist, intent on determining what this place really was.

After Meng Hao had proceeded about a hundred meters down the valley, the Demon Sealing Jade within his bag of holding started to glow. Meng Hao took it out and held it in his hand. He slowed down a bit, but continued to move downward.

As he descended, the mist grew thicker and colder. It seemed somewhat sinister in nature, but Meng Hao was no longer of the Qi Condensation stage. If he was, his body may not have been able to withstand temperature.

After moving along for the time it takes half an incense stick to burn, it grew painfully cold, so much so that it felt like blades on his skin. Finally, he made out what appeared to be the bottom of the valley.

There was no vegetation here, only endless mist. Strewn about on the valley floor were the bones of various birds and beasts. Everything was quiet. Meng Hao looked around cautiously. He would not act rashly, but instead take the time to examine his surroundings. Finally, his eyes glittered as they fell upon the only part of the valley that didn't seem to have any mist in it.

It was... the mouth of a cave, roughly three meters wide!

The edges of the cave mouth were formed of thick earth which seemed to be frozen over. It was impossible to tell how deep the cave was; it stretched back into inky blackness. Frigid Qi poured out from the cave, which then turned into mist.

Stretching back into the cave, off to the edge, was a dark red rope. Other

than this, there was nothing else.

At this point, the Demon Sealing Jade in Meng Hao's hand glowed even more brightly. It seemed as if something was calling for it to enter the mysterious, endless cave. Who knew what was hiding inside?

Meng Hao hesitated for a moment, looking at the cave. After a moment, he smacked his bag of holding. A flying sword appeared. It turned into a beam of light as it shot toward the cave and then disappeared inside. Meng Hao concentrated, listening carefully. Soon, a sound rang out like that of metal hitting stone. Meng Hao's expression changed.

"This ancient cave appears to be about eight hundred meters deep." He walked forward, stopping at the mouth of the cave. He hesitated for a moment, then looked at the brightly glowing jade slip in his hand. Determination appeared on his face. He slapped his bag of holding, causing several items to appear. The black net flew out, along with seven or eight feathers. Even with the wooden swords circulating around him, though, he felt a bit nervous. He bit his tongue, and the Lightning Flag flew out, turning into a flickering, lightning-filled mist that surrounded his body. Surrounded by his various magical items, Meng Hao entered the cave.

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# Chapter 101: Eighth Generation Demon Sealer

“If I don’t investigate just because it’s a little dangerous, then what will happen in the future when I face dangerous situations? I’d probably be even more willing to hold back. That’s not the proper attitude with which to face the law of the jungle in the Cultivation world. This Demon Sealing Jade is from Patriarch Reliance. It’s obviously an artifact from the Demon Sealing Sect. Furthermore... I myself am a disciple of the Demon Sealing Sect. I must figure out what’s going on!” Meng Hao’s eyes glittered as he thought back to the Demonic technique used by Shangguan Xiu, and the Demonic magic of Patriarch Reliance. Stubbornness filled his heart as he entered the cave.

“That having been said, I still need to be extremely cautious. If there are any signs of enemies that I can’t contend with, then I’ll leave immediately, with no regrets.” Meng Hao’s eyes shined with determination. Lightning-filled mist arced around him, his two wooden swords hovered around, and the feathers spun in a protective spiral. A look of utmost caution covered his face and spiritual energy emanated out from him. He would instantly be able to sense even the slightest sign of trouble.

As a Foundation Establishment Cultivator, his body was stronger; he could fly and had Spiritual Sense. All of these made it easier to protect himself and ensure that he lived a long life. They also gave him the opportunity to face dangerous situations with confidence.

At the moment, if Meng Hao were of the Qi Condensation stage, even if he had the courage to enter this place, he simply couldn’t.

It was pitch black, and Meng Hao felt the threatening pressure of the Frigid Qi which continuously roiled out from up ahead.

Within the cold, there was also the faint Blood Qi, which became thicker and thicker the further Meng Hao proceeded. A look of caution on his face, he continued onward. One hundred meters in, he stopped momentarily and used a wooden sword to cut a hole into the earth wall.

Then, he slapped his bag of holding to produce a talisman, which he placed inside the hole.

This talisman was the one he'd acquired from Wang Tengfei that day long ago.

He moved onward until he was about two hundred meters into the cave. There, he stopped and produced ten flying swords from within his bag of holding, which he stabbed into the walls. As he proceeded further into the cave, he continued to stop every hundred meters and make such preparations. If anything unexpected happened, then he would have some backup life-saving options during his retreat.

By the time Meng Hao was about four hundred meters into the cave, the mist surrounding him had begun to seethe and roil. A faint moaning sound could be heard. A look of concentration appeared on Meng Hao's face, and he stopped momentarily. He looked around carefully for a long moment before proceeded further into the cave, following the red rope with flickering eyes.

Soon he was five hundred meters. Suddenly, a piercing shriek emanated from within the recesses of the cave, along with an ear-splitting roar. The mist surrounding him flickered with massive quantities of electricity, which formed together to form a Lightning Globe. With a boom, it shot out and slammed into an indistinct figure up ahead. The figure flickered and disappeared.

Meng Hao gasped. His Lightning Flag was very powerful, even more so now that he was at the Foundation Establishment stage. The fact that it hadn't exterminated the indistinct form proved how powerful the figure was. Meng Hao stopped for a moment, hesitating. He looked up ahead in the cave, rubbing the Demon Sealing Jade. Gritting his teeth, he moved forward.

He continued on another two hundred meters, bringing him a full seven hundred meters into the cave. The Frigid Qi caused his body to quiver. The Blood Qi buffeted against him, filling his nostrils with every breath he took. Dark, crimson patches had begun to appear on his skin, and his eyes

glowed red.

“I’m seven hundred meters in, only one hundred meters from the end....” His eyes had shined with more redness. At the moment, his unwillingness to let a matter drop had flared up. He moved forward, the full power of his Foundation Establishment Cultivation base in play. His Dao Pillar thrummed, sending boundless spiritual energy coursing throughout his body. He moved faster, speeding down the tunnel.

In the space of a few breaths, he caught sight of what appeared to be the end of the cave, as well as the sword he had sent it.

As things became clear, he realized that the cave was not eight hundred meters deep as he had thought. Eight hundred meters in was a round platform, in the middle of which was a hole, two meters wide!

The rope, which appeared to be soaked through with blood, disappeared into the deep hole, which seemed to drop down into eternity.

Meng Hao’s sword was embedded into the side of the platform, which was why he had assumed the cave was eight hundred meters deep. He was surprised to see this. But then, his eyes suddenly narrowed; the Demon Sealing Jade was now emitting a massive amount of blinding light. It was then that he noticed a skeleton, sitting cross-legged next to the platform!

In the skeleton’s hand was an ancient-looking jade slip. This slip also emitted a brilliant glow, as if it were somehow connected to the jade slip he held in his own hand.

Before Meng Hao had the chance to process all of this, a shrill scream filled the air. A blurred figure raced toward him. The mist defended him, but Meng Hao could clearly see a six-fingered hand pressing against it, reaching toward him. It stopped about half a meter from him, where a massive conglomeration of lightning resisted it.

A ghastly Frigid Qi emanated from the hand, which appeared to belong, not to an adult, but a child!

Boom!

Meng Hao was shoved backward. Eyes flashing, he waved his hand, and

the two wooden swords shot toward the indistinct figure. However, despite the swords' incredible speed, the figure was faster. It dodged and then shot backward to crouch next to the round platform. Underneath the glow of the ancient jade, Meng Hao could not see it clearly.

It had an emaciated body, like that of a feral animal. But upon closer examination, it looked more like a seven-or eight-year-old child. Its eyes were completely red, and as it stared at Meng Hao, it opened its mouth to reveal black teeth. It screamed.

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever, although coldness gleamed in his eyes. Sword auras began to glow around the two wooden swords as they circled Meng Hao. Suddenly, Meng Hao's eyes narrowed. From within the hole in the flat platform, ten dim streams of light emerged as ten figures appeared which looked exactly the same as the child. They radiated viciousness as they stared at Meng Hao.

If this was the extent of it, it wouldn't have been a big deal. But, behind the ten creatures, revealed by the glow of the ancient jade, Meng Hao saw a white-haired man floating up out of the hole in the platform.

His face was devoid of blood, and he wore a white robe. His white hair floated about him. His eyes were closed, and a vicious scar stretched from between his eyebrows down to his chin. The flesh around the wound stretched back to reveal bone. The ten creatures surrounded him. The whole scene caused a profound sense of danger to well up in Meng Hao.

His scalp grew numb, and he began to inch backward. Before he could even take three steps, a shrill screaming filled the air. The ten creatures launched themselves from the platform, shooting directly toward Meng Hao.

It was at this moment that the Demon Sealing Jade flew into the air of its own volition. A bright glow spread out from it. At the same time, the ancient jade in the hands of the skeleton next to the platform also flew up into the air.

An ancient and profound voice filled the air. "An ancient path, persist in attempting to seal the Heavens, the Mountain Sea Realm, the vast

Heavens, Great Benevolence, great tribulation shall be faced in the Ninth Mountain and the Ninth Sea, my life shall last at eternity!” It boomed throughout the ancient cave, causing the ten creatures to emit blood-curdling screams. Meng Hao watched as they instantly transformed into black smoke.

The white-haired man suddenly opened his eyes.

Within his eye sockets.... were no eyes, only bloody holes. It looked as if the eyes had been dug out years ago!

As his eyes opened, the two ancient pieces of jade emitted beams of light which interlocked to form a restrictive spell filled with magical symbols. It settled down over the area, causing the white-robed man to begin to tremble, unable to move further.

He slowly lifted his right hand, pushing against the restrictive spell. He himself made no sound whatsoever, but his action caused the entire cave to begin to shake.

All of this happened too quickly. Meng Hao breathed raggedly as he looked at the two ancient pieces of jade. He lifted his hand, and instantly, the two pieces of jade flew toward him to land on his palm.

The second piece of ancient jade was inscribed with a magical character. Meng Hao had seen this character before in his studies in the Magic Pavilion in the Reliance Sect. It was the character for ‘eight!’

As soon as it touched his hand, a profound voice filled his mind. It sounded ancient, as if it were being projected from a time long, long ago. It echoed out in his mind.

“The bloodline of the Demon Sealer has been passed down as long as the Dao has existed. I am the Eighth Generation Demon Sealer Daoist Master. I am determined to walk the path of tribulation in the Ninth Mountain and Ninth Sea. In all likelihood, I will perish, so I leave my sentience along with my clone here to resolve the ill-fated relationship between Da Nu and myself....

“Sealed a million meters down, pressed down by the weight of this

section of the Milky Way Sea, buried. Grief and sorrow are part of the Dao of heaven and earth. However, I am a Demon Sealer Daoist Master, and I must not allow distractions into my heart... So I leave my clone here to accompany her and resolve her Demonic resentment.

“If you are of the Demon Sealer bloodline, place a drop of your blood onto the jade in confirmation. If you are not of the Demon Sealer bloodline, then remove yourself from this place. If the jade leaves without tasting blood, you will be cursed for three generations; your descendants will never see the moon and you shall perish.”

The voice disappeared, and the glow from the ancient jade slowly faded. Meng Hao muttered to himself, his eyes gleaming. He wasn't sure whether or not to place a drop of blood onto the ancient jade. But if he didn't, then he didn't dare to take the jade away. He didn't fully believe the warning uttered by the ancient voice. And yet, he couldn't ignore it.

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# Chapter 102: Eighth Demon Sealing Hex!

Murmuring to himself, Meng Hao frowned. He looked over toward the black hole. At the moment, there was not just one white-robed man floating there, but about seven, all in different positions. Their bloody gazes were fixed upon him.

Although he couldn't see their eyeballs, Meng Hao's entire body grew cold. This place was incredibly bizarre, and he was filled with the desire to leave as soon as possible.

But then he looked down at the ancient jade pieces in his hand, and resolve filled his eyes. He bit the tip of his tongue, allowing a drop of blood to fall onto the second ancient jade.

As soon as the blood drop splashed onto it, it began to vibrate. A gaseous substance appeared in front of Meng Hao, which solidified into a gray-colored Qi. It shot toward him, entering his body in the spot between his eyebrows. A roaring sound filled his mind, and then an ancient-sounding voice sounded out again within his head. This time it was more clear, as if the speaker were standing next to his ear.

"I was not always the Eighth Generation Demon Sealer Daoist Master. It was outside of the Sixth Mountain that I gained enlightenment from the will left behind by the Seventh Generation Demon Sealer Daoist Master upon his death. I willingly cut away my past and reversed my Dao, inheriting the past generation's Dao. I roamed creation, and eventually, refined half of the sea outside the Sixth Mountain in order to forge the Demon Sealing Jade that is required of each generation.

"With the help of the Demon Sealing Jade, I mastered the Seventh Demon Sealing Hex. Since ancient times, each new generation of the Demon Sealer bloodline must create a new Hex; therefore, I created the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex. Throughout my life, I sought out the other scattered Hexes, but sadly, could only find three. What a pity.

"If my successor is lucky, he will be able to absorb the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex, and then create the Ninth Demon Sealing Hex. Then the

Demon Sealer bloodline will be in accord with the law of the Dao.

“The Demon Sealing bloodline seeks out the great Demons of heaven and earth, drawing out the Qi of all the living things under vault of heaven. Seizing Demonic lives, refining Demonic blood, using it and then... the concepts of Demonic Sealing, Demonic Construction, and Demonic Transformation....

“I don’t know which generation of Demon Sealing you are, perhaps the Ninth. If so, you’re lucky, but at the same time, unlucky. Nine is highest number, a peak of deterioration. The path you tread... is filled with many variables.

“This clone only possesses the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex. I now pass it on to you. This Hex uses Demonic Qi as its foundation, and can... seal bodies, seal spirits, seal Immortals, seal divinities, seal the luck from the Heavens, seal all living things in the world!” The voice echoed out in Meng Hao’s head, more and more clearly until it became a thunderous roar that branded itself onto his mind. The brand was an ancient character, the character for Sealing!

Eventually the echoing roar faded away. Meng Hao didn’t know it, but ten days had passed in the outside world while he had been immersed in the branding process. Another full moon had arrived.

In the valley outside, the moonlight pierced into the mists, causing them to churn and seethe like seawaters. The toad geezer once again arrived on the scene. This time, there was an additional Cultivator of the ninth level of Qi Condensation. He had obviously just broken through to the ninth level. Nonetheless, this filled the group with complete confidence.

“Now that brother Sun has made a breakthrough in his Cultivation base, we will definitely pull out five hundred meters!”

“Right. We’ve waited for this day for too long. If we can pull out five hundred meters, then our ancestral spirit will awaken. Our Cultivation bases will raise to another level. If the luck exists, we might even reach Foundation Establishment!”

“It’s hard to determine the probability of Foundation Establishment luck.



However, according to the ancient records passed down from our ancestors, pulling out five hundred meters will definitely bring some type of luck with it.” They exchanged gleaming glances, then immediately went to work under the thick moonlight. Of course, Meng Hao couldn’t be further from their minds; as far as they were concerned he had long since passed away.

They spat out globules of blood, and formed the black blade. The mists began to spin into a whirlpool, and then the red rope appeared. The toad geezer grabbed ahold of it and let out a howl as he pulled.

A thunderous boom echoed out and the rope began to move. The movement reached down through the valley into the cave, all the way to the spot where Meng Hao stood, then further down into the magically sealed hole.

As soon as the rope began to move, expressions of panic appeared on the faces of the eight or so white-haired men. Suddenly, nearly a dozen of the creatures which looked like seven-or eight-year-old children appeared. Their shrill screams echoed throughout the deepness of the cave.

One of the strange properties of this rope was that when it was pulled, it began to emit massive amounts of Frigid Qi, as well as a rotten smell. The glittering restrictive spell trembled, as if it might collapse at any moment.

Time passed. The seven men outside heaved on the rope, gradually pulling out fifty meters. The roaring grew more intense, and even more Frigid Qi poured out. The rotten smell grew many times thicker and stronger.

Soon... a panting sound could be heard in the cave. It sounded as if some living thing were in the midst of some sort of struggle. A figure appeared, screaming shrilly. It launched itself at the shining restrictive spell.

The spell shook, and cracks appeared on its edges.

It was at this moment that Meng Hao’s eyes became fully clear. He shook himself and took in a deep breath. A gleam appeared in his eyes as he became aware of what was happening in the ancient cave. He saw the rope moving, as well as the rapidly collapsing restrictive spell.

There was no time to think. He clasped his hands and bowed toward the skeleton. Then, carrying his mist with him, shot back toward the cave entrance. Before he could move even ten meters, the shining restrictive spell shattered. Ten emaciated creatures shot out, followed by the eight white-haired old men. All of them aimed directly for Meng Hao, screaming as they approached.

Behind them, thin streams of blackness floated up out of the deep hole. They looked like hair. The panting sound from within the hole became clearer.

Something inside was struggling fiercely, as if it desired nothing more than to burst out of the hole.

Meng Hao's face was pale but his eyes shined brightly. His Dao Pillar began to rotate, sending the power of Foundation Establishment coursing throughout his body. He dashed forward dozens of meters. Unfortunately, the emaciated, child-like creatures behind him were even faster. Over and over again, they crashed into Meng Hao's lightning mist.

Booms echoed out as the lightning mist rapidly began to deteriorate. The child-like creatures didn't seem to feel any pain. Every time they were knocked away by lightning bolts, they immediately charged back again. Everywhere Meng Hao looked, spirits creatures charged toward him.

Sword auras shined out brightly as the wooden swords circled around him. Feathers spun, causing a wind to blow out. Meng Hao moved onward as quickly as possible.

That was when the eight white-haired men drew close. At the same time, several of the child-like spirit creatures appeared in front of him, blocking his path. Meng Hao felt a profound sense of danger. Without hesitation, he slapped his bag of holding. A hundred flying swords appeared, forming into a Sword Rain which charged forth.

"Boom!"

As soon as Meng Hao uttered the word, the flying swords detonated, turning into a cloud of shrapnel that swept the creatures off of their feet. Meng Hao raced past them toward the entrance of the cave, which was

now about five hundred meters away.

The shrieking behind him grew more intense. More and more black tendrils billowed about. They were nearly one hundred meters behind him.

Meng Hao didn't have time to look closely. He knew that if he slowed even a little bit, he would most likely lose his life. Even the slightest delay in reaction on his part, and he would be finished.

"With great risk comes great reward. Getting the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex makes all of this worth it. Too bad I haven't gained complete enlightenment regarding the Hex, otherwise I could use it right now." He took a deep breath and pushed forward at top speed. The cave entrance was now almost four hundred meters away.

It was then that the white-robed men behind Meng Hao raised their arms and waved their fingers toward him.

The finger attacks made Meng Hao's entire body turn cold. Without hesitation, he flickered his hand in an incantation and waved backwards. The feathers surrounding him shot back, then suddenly detonated. Another hundred swords appeared from within his bag of holding. They also shot back and then exploded.

A massive boom filled the cave tunnel, resounding outwards and diminishing the power of the white-robed men's finger attacks. However, despite this, they still bore down on Meng Hao.

His face was pale as the mist around him shook; a gap opened up. His body instantly became freezing cold, and he coughed up a mouthful of blood. The blood instantly froze into solid chunks. It felt as if the power of his Cultivation base dropped by half. He was in great danger. However, amidst the danger, Meng Hao suddenly grabbed the red rope. He pulled it, borrowing from its power to shoot forward.

Meanwhile, out in the valley, the seven men gasped for breath. Gritting their teeth, they continued to heave on the red rope, pulling continuously. Behind them were over a dozen poison beasts, mouths clenched onto the rope as they pulled with incredible might.

“Dammit, how come it suddenly became so heavy!?”

“What’s happening? We just pulled out one hundred meters, it shouldn’t be like this!” The seven men were shocked, and anxious expressions appeared on their faces. Suddenly, the rope pulled back on them, jerking them several meters forward. Then the tugging force disappeared. But moments later, even as they gritted their teeth and pulled on the rope again, it was tugged backwards with great strength.

As they cried out to each other in confusion, Meng Hao was inside the cave, pulling on the rope to launch himself forward. He coughed up more blood. Without hesitation, he consumed some medicinal pills, not wasting any time as he used all his power to flee.

His expression was grim. The lightning mist around him was growing thinner and thinner. If his reaction time had been any slower in dealing with the finger attacks from the white-robed men, Meng Hao’s body would have been frozen to death.

# Chapter 103: Treasures

“What is that thing!?” panted Meng Hao, his heart grim. With no time to even wipe the blood from his mouth, he popped a Foundation Establishment Pill into his mouth. Because of the level of his Cultivation base, the pill would not cause his body to be paralyzed. Its power instantly flushed out the Frigid Qi.

No one but Meng Hao could be so wasteful.

His body seems to transform into a flash of light as he pulled on the rope, borrowing its power to shoot even closer to the cave mouth. As of now, he was only two hundred meters away. At his heels, roughly three meters away from him, were the black tendrils of hair and the other creatures. Further back, eight hundred meters into the cave, at the end of the floating black mass of tendrils appeared a human head!

The red rope penetrated the head between the eyebrows and then continued to stretch down into the darkness.

It was a woman’s head. The beauty of her features was difficult to describe, as if she didn’t belong in the mortal world. Her open eyes were filled with confusion and frustration, as if before her death, there were too many things that she didn’t understand, and too few answers.

To Meng Hao, two hundred meters was not very far. Given his current Cultivation base, he should be able to cross the distance in the space of a couple of breaths. But, the Frigid Qi in the cave was affecting his speed, and the relentless attacking pursuit behind him forced him to concentrate.

The hair tendrils continued to spread out, and it seemed as if it would reach Meng Hao’s feet at any moment. Meng Hao took a deep breath, then lifted his hand toward the rocky wall.

As he pushed against it, the power of his Cultivation base exploded out to activate some of the backup magical items he had placed there. Ten flying swords suddenly flew out, shooting toward the tendrils and then exploding. A boom echoed out, shaking the cave. Meng Hao shot forward, pulling fiercely on the red rope.

Outside in the valley, the seven Cultivators' faces were pale white. Three of them spat up blood and staggered backward. The remaining four gritted their teeth and held on. Behind them, the poison beasts seemed to be losing power.

"Maybe this time there will be an incredible treasure. That's why it's so heavy!"

"Right. When we pulled out that Spirit Sealing rock, it was incredibly heavy...."

"Haha! We'll pull out a similar treasure this time. Don't be stingy with your medicinal pills. We have to pull out this treasure!" The three injured Cultivators gritted their teeth, panting. They pulled out medicinal pills and consumed them. With looks of excitement and anticipation, they once again stepped forward and pulled on the rope.

Down in the cave, Meng Hao borrowed momentum from the rope to fly another one hundred meters. The black tendrils were now a bit further away from him.

His eyes gleaming, his hand shot out toward the cave wall, to where he had hidden the talisman. It began to emit a golden light, which swirled about and then coalesced into blurry figure which was impossible to see clearly. It turned and, emanating a shocking power, charged toward the black hair and the other pursuing spirits.

As the explosion billowed out, Meng Hao leaped forward. The pursuing spirits shrieked madly, charging once again toward him. A cold look appeared in his eyes, and he said a single word.

"Boom!"

The talisman would now serve an additional function. Another explosion ripped through the ancient cave. Borrowing the momentum of the explosion, Meng Hao surged forward. He was now only ten meters from the cave mouth. He took hold of the red rope and pulled hard. In an instant, he shot forward ten meters, flying out of the cave!

As he shot out of the cave, ten spirit creatures charged forward.

However, they stopped immediately when they reached the cave mouth, shrieking, as if they dared not step outside. Their shrieks echoed out, but did not leave the valley; there seemed to be some sort of restrictive spell in place. As such, the seven struggling men outside didn't hear it.

Meng Hao held onto the red rope, allowing it to pull him upward. He turned and looked back down at the cave. As he did, he heard the voice of a woman, filled with frustration and doubt. It also carried with it a billowing sense of grief which shook Meng Hao.

"The Dao.... What is the Dao?!"

The voice grew shrill as it spoke, causing Meng Hao's heart to seize with pain. He drew further and further away from the valley floor, passing through layer after layer of mist, until he neared its border.

"Pull! Haha! Let's see what treasure comes up!"

"Maybe it's another Spirit Sealing stone. Whatever it is, we definitely will not have wasted our effort this time!"

The seven men pulled excitedly, their eyes burning with passion. And then Meng Hao emerged. Their mouths dropped open and they stared at what they had painstakingly pulled up. The red roped dropped from their hands.

They gaped, dumbstruck, their minds spinning out of control. This was something they couldn't possibly have predicted, and it left their brains blank. They had expected a treasure, but instead had ended up with Meng Hao. They couldn't believe their eyes.

"This.... This...."

"Dammit, what's going on?! How can this be?!"

"That's... that's the outsider from before. He's not dead after all. But, how could it be him that we pulled up?"

Their minds reeled, especially the toad geezer, who had no reaction other than to gape. As for the Cultivator who had lost the Spirit Snake, when he recognized Meng Hao, his eyes filled with rage.

“It’s that damned outsider....” he said angrily, taking a step toward Meng Hao. He couldn’t believe that he had spat up so much blood in his efforts to pull Meng Hao out of the mist. His rage billowed up.

As he walked forward, Meng Hao looked at him calmly. As he did, the man’s body suddenly began to shake and his organs felt as if they would stop working. His Cultivation base seemed as if it had lost its ability to function. The blood drained from his face, and astonishment filled his eyes. A massive pressure bore down on him, causing him to shake so violently that he thought he might fall into pieces. Meng Hao continued to look at him.

This was the crushing power caused by the vast difference in their Cultivation bases. The man knew that by merely lifting his hand, Meng Hao could explode him into a million pieces. An intense, indescribable dread welled up within him. Shaking, he coughed up blood, so scared that he didn’t even dare to take a step backward.

The six other men had already begun to feel sick to their stomach, but seeing this, seeing Meng Hao standing there like an imposing mountain, their hearts shook. They knew that this mountain could exterminate them all in an instant.

“He’s hovering in the air!!” It was at this moment that the toad geezer’s face changed. Looking at Meng Hao’s feet, he realized that this flight was not the same method used as when he and his fellows flew on their poison beasts. This was... true flight!

“A Foundation Establishment expert!” The words pounded into their hearts, causing all of the men’s expressions to change. Their faces were filled with shocked disbelief. They remembered that two years ago, he was only a ninth-level Qi Condensation Cultivator. They even had assumed him dead.

But here he was again, this time in a position vastly superior to theirs. As a Foundation Establishment expert, he could end their life at any time. Their were faces pale as they all cupped their hands and bowed deeply to him.



“The junior generation offers greetings to the elder generation...” said the seven men, their fists clasped in front of them. Dread filled their hearts as they thought about what would happen if Meng Hao suddenly turned hostile. This was especially true of the man who had lost his Spirit Snake; anxiety filled him. His body trembling, he dropped to the ground to kowtow to the expressionless Meng Hao.

Even as he dropped to his knees, Meng Hao lifted his hand and waved it forward. A flying sword appeared; it was an ordinary sword, but it contained the power of Meng Hao’s Foundation Establishment Cultivation base. It shot forward, disintegrating as it did so. The shrapnel shot down toward the Spirit Snake Cultivator.

A blood-curdling shriek rang out. He was of the ninth level of Qi Condensation, but blood showered out of his body, and he was killed instantly. His body toppled down into the mists.

The other six men stood there trembling, not daring to even flee. They kowtowed to Meng Hao, not showing any reaction whatsoever to the attack just now. Actually, the man’s death had come as no surprise. From the time that Meng Hao had first appeared until this day, he had been most venomous in expressing his hatred for him.

If Meng Hao did not eliminate him, the other six men would have found it strange. That, in turn, could have given birth to other problems.

Although Meng Hao had not been a part of the Cultivation World for a very long time, he had experienced many things in the past six years. He was not the soft-hearted scholar he once had been. When killing became necessary, he did it without hesitation.

Enmity had been created two years ago when the man had attacked him, and then had his Spirit Snake killed. The man was of the ninth level of Qi Condensation, so it was impossible to tell whether or not he would reach Foundation Establishment. Killing him now would prevent any future troubles.

From the incident with Ding Yan, Meng Hao had learned that even when attacking enemies weaker than yourself, you must be quick and thorough

in the kill.

From the incident with Wang Tengfei, he had learned that even an opponent with a lower Cultivation base could harbor resentment, and pursue vengeance ruthlessly.

In these six years, Meng Hao had matured, both in his personality and in his methods of dealing with matters.

# Chapter 104: A Great Wind Arises, The Roc Spreads its Wings

As he looked down at the six men who trembled in fear like cicadas during winter, Meng Hao for the first time experienced the strength and respect shown to powerful experts in the Cultivation world. It would be more accurate to say respect and fear. Two years ago, these men had been willing to attack him even though he was of the ninth level of Qi Condensation. But now, each and every one of them was shaking in his boots.

“I want you to tell me everything you know about this place,” said Meng Hao coolly. “If you hide anything from me....” He let his words trail off as his gaze swept over them. They trembled as they saw the remnants of the red glow emanating from his eye.

The glow was filled with a Demonic air, and when they saw it, their pupils shrank reflexively. The sight seemed to have been branded onto their spirits. Their expressions changed; they looked terrified to the extreme and would clearly not hide anything from Meng Hao. They told him everything, even taking out the village’s ancient records and giving them to Meng Hao. They showed him maps, ancestral poison recipes... everything.

Several days later, Meng Hao left the valley region, respectfully sent off by the six Cultivators. His bearing was calm and his face expressionless as he sat cross-legged on an enormous green leaf, which transformed into a multicolored beam and shot toward the Southern Domain.

After he left, the six Cultivators relaxed a bit. As for the man who had died, they had long since chosen to forget that. They did not have the slightest shred of a desire to seek vengeance. They simply gazed off in the direction Meng Hao had taken and hoped he would never return.

A few more days passed. It was late at night in the deep valley; there, in a region impossible to see, was the mouth of an ancient cave. Everything was calm.

Within the cave was a red rope, as well as several spirits who looked like seven-or eight-year-old children, squatting there, about eight hundred meters into the cave. Occasionally they would let out a howl or two.

The rope went down into a hole that seemed endless. It stretched down into the earth, deeper and deeper. Soon, a woman's head could be seen, pierced by the rope. Her face was pure white, her eyes open, gazing frustratedly at the darkness.

Past the head, the hole continued to stretch down, along with the red rope.

Ten thousand meters, one hundred thousand meters, five hundred thousand meters.... There, it began to smell like the sea. In fact, at this point, seawater could be seen. The rope sank into the seawater, continuing on, seemingly without end.

If someone could see that far down, one million meters, they would be gazing upon... a pitch black sea. The rope stretched on into the sea depths to this area; it was impossible to tell exactly how far the sea and the rope stretched. Up ahead was a stone formation that appeared to be several tens of thousands of meters in diameter.

Massive stone boulders had been erected, ring after ring, layer after layer. In the very center of the stone formation was a wooden coffin, onto the surface of which was attached the red rope.

The distance between this location and the mountain valley is difficult to describe. The rope is simply too long, and not completely straight, either. If someone pulled on it with incredible force, perhaps about five hundred meters, then maybe you could measure it at approximately one million meters.

It seemed the coffin had been in this location for a very, very long time. At this moment, a scraping sound could be heard. Along with the scraping, the lid of the coffin... slowly began to open. It moved upwards about three inches!

A blackness seeped out of the coffin, spreading out into the seawater....

The name of this sea was... the Milky Way.

This sea existed between two great sub-continents of the world. As the blackness spread out into the sea, a school of a hundred fish, each about the size of a palm, swam quickly through the water. The blackness enveloped them.

Time passed, and the blackness slowly shrank down, then disappeared. The school of a hundred fish had been reduced to bones.... Except for one remaining fish. Swishing its tail, it swam out from within the bones. Its body was pitch black, and growing out of its body were two tentacles. The tentacles swiftly grew longer and longer, until they were nearly one hundred meters in length. As it swam upwards through the water, the tentacles writhed, making the fish look terrifying.

It moved upward rapidly, as fast as lightning. As it raced upwards, the Milky Way Sea around it began to churn and roar. Suddenly, it broke through the surface, soaring up into the night sky.

The instant it left the sea, a tremor ran through its body. In the blink of an eye, its body expanded, and its appearance changed. Soon it was ten meters long, one hundred, one thousand, ten thousand!

Within the space of a few breaths, it had grown to nearly one hundred thousand meters in length. It was now no longer a fish, but a bird. It appeared to be an enormous roc!

Death Qi roiled off of the roc's body. Its body seemed ancient, as if it had just awoken from a deep slumber. Its life force was not strong, and its eyes were dim. It seemed as if its life might flicker out at any moment.

"Rebirth...." The resonant voice sprang out from the roc's mouth as it flapped its wings and began flying in the direction of the Southern Domain.

Despite its enormous speed, if it wanted to leave the Milky Way Sea and reach the Southern domain, it would need to fly for more than half a year.

Meanwhile, Meng Hao sped along through the sky, sitting cross-legged on the enormous green leaf. Black clouds roiled above him, and lightning

crashed down all around him, along with pouring rain.

However, the rain didn't touch Meng Hao. The leaf emitted a glowing shield which blocked the rainwater. Meng Hao shot through the stormy night, occasionally illuminated by the flashes of lightning.

He lowered his head to look at the jade slip he held in his hand, a look of deep thoughtfulness in his eyes.

"According to the legends, that cave in the valley leads to the Milky Way Sea... The villagers have been watching over that area since ancient times, and every full moon, they pull on that rope. Every time they do, they get rewards of some sort. The whole thing seems a little fishy." He turned his head, and his eyes glittered as he looked out through the thunderstorm toward the location of the mountain valley. Bits and pieces of some larger story seemed to be coming together. He put the jade slip back into a bag of holding, within which were a large assortment of bottles and jars. They contained various formulas refined by old man toad and the others, as well as a collection of poison pills created by their Clan.

They had given these gifts in tribute to Meng Hao, as well as a handful of jade slips.

Most of the poisons would be deadly to someone of the Qi Condensation stage, but would have less of an effect on someone at Foundation Establishment. However, there were a few that were special. For example, one was called Delight Pill. It would turn into a mist that, when inhaled, would cause the victim to have sexual hallucinations.

He glanced over the various poison pills, and then retrieved another jade slip. This jade slip contained maps of the area. He noticed one area which would take about half a year to travel to, that contained a teleportation portal.

The teleportation portal was controlled by a Clan of Cultivators, and was the only one in the area. Using it would allow him to teleport to the Southern Domain, which would cut a huge amount of time off of his journey there. After teleporting into the Southern Domain, he would be only about a half month's travel from the border of the State of Eastern

Emergence, one of the Nine States of the Southern Domain.

“The Nine States of the Southern Domain form the center of the Southern Domain. Nine flourishing mortal nations, each one of them much larger than the State of Zhao. With such a huge amount of mortals, the resources available are even greater and thus, the rise of the illustrious Sects and Clans of the Southern Domain.

“Five great Clans and three great Sects. Each exists in its respective nation. As for the ninth nation, its proximity to the Western Desert caused it to become a flourishing trading hub. Eventually, it came to be called the Black Lands.” Meng Hao put the jade slip away. There wasn’t much information. However, it corroborated what he’d learned back in the Reliance Sect. As of now, he could visualize a rough outline of the Southern Domain, although it wasn’t very detailed.

“Once I get to the Southern Domain, I’ll have to acquire a better map, then I’ll understand things better.” He looked up at the rain and lightning, his eyes glowing brightly.

“I have a lot of acquaintances in the Southern Domain; Elder Sister Xu, Elder Brother Chen, Fatty and... Wang Tengfei!” A smile appeared on his face, a smile filled with stubbornness.

“It’s been many years. Meng Hao is coming!”

Several months later, in an endless strip of barren mountains, atop a tall mountain peak, a thunderous boom rang out. It was a beautiful mountain, dotted with various stockade villages. The mountain peak was connected to surrounding mountains by long iron chains, which seemed to form a huge spell formation.

In the sky above, two people were locked in magical combat. Below, crowds of people looked up in awe.

One of the combatants was a burly man who appeared to be over thirty years of age. Bare-chested, a golden-colored centipede was wrapped around his right hand. His left hand flickered in an incantation, and a gigantic sail appeared. It rippled in the wind, emitting a piercing shrieking sound. The other person was Meng Hao.

He was not using the Lightning Flag, nor had the wooden swords appeared. A simple flying sword circled around him which he used to attack. At the same time, he flashed an incantation gesture, and a howling Flame Python flew forth, over twenty meters in length. Next, multiple spinning Wind Blades appeared, amazing the onlookers.

A massive boom echoed out, and the two of them each shot backward. The burly man laughed and clasped his hands in respect toward Meng Hao.

“Brother Meng, your Cultivation base is extraordinary. I, Shan, truly admire you.”

Meng Hao lifted his hand. The flying sword returned to circle around him. He smiled, and returned the salute.

“Brother Shan is being modest. You only attacked with eighty percent of your power, but I had to use all of my power to defend. I am the one to be doing the admiring.” The words seemed casual, but when he heard them, the burly man’s heart shook.

Two days ago, Meng Hao had arrived here and had asked about being able to use their teleportation portal. This place was unlike the mountain valley Meng Hao had just come from. The chiefs of the stockade villages in the area were all Foundation Establishment Cultivators. They welcomed Meng Hao enthusiastically, treating him to a feast and exchanging tips about Cultivation with him. In order to prove the extent of his power, he had agreed to a sparring match with one of the Foundation Establishment Cultivators.

“Brother Meng is the one being modest. You attacked casually, and not with your full strength. I’m really curious how much of your power you used?” The man’s eyes shined; the sparring match had been his idea. But as it had proceeded, he had grown more and more apprehensive. Both of them were at the Foundation Establishment stage, but it seemed as if his opponent were only using about half of his power. Furthermore, Meng Hao had been able to tell how much power he was using.

“When might I be able to use your teleportation portal?” said Meng Hao,



sidestepping the question. He smiled, although the smile didn't touch his eyes. He had actually not even used a third of his full strength.

“Oh, that's simple. You can use it today.” The burly man nodded, muttering to himself.

Soon after, the spell formation within the mountains activated, and Meng Hao's body disappeared. As the glow faded, the burly man surnamed Shan frowned.

Next to him were two men of the ninth level of Qi condensation. As Meng Hao disappeared, one of them said, “Chief, that guy...”

“I'm not sure where he came from,” said the burly man, his voice deep. “His magic is strange, as is his Foundation Establishment Cultivation base. I felt him out with some attacks and could tell that he's an experienced fighter. He came here alone, but seemed completely at ease. He must have some unique and special techniques. Yeah, it's not worth it to provoke him.”

When he had attempted to feel out Meng Hao, he had failed. Meng Hao kept his power sealed up tight. This caused the man's fear and suspicion to grow stronger. The teleportation portal couldn't be used by just anyone; if your power is not sufficient, it could take your life, which happened occasionally. Therefore, he let Meng Hao use the portal, to ensure that no calamity befell his village.

# Chapter 105: Poison Blossoms in the Right Eye

There is a wide plane on the border of the State of Eastern Emergence, in the center of the Southern Domain. There, the glow of a teleportation spell appeared, then faded. Outside of the teleportation portal, seven or eight Cultivators of the Qi Condensation stage sat cross-legged. They stood up as Meng Hao appeared, saluting him with clasped hands.

These Cultivators were posted here to defend the teleportation portal and to receive visitors to the village. When Meng Hao appeared and they sensed the deepness of his Cultivation base, their respect for him grew even greater.

Meng Hao walked out of the teleportation portal. His eyes swept over the Cultivators, then flickered up to the sky above the wide plane. Everything looked unfamiliar. He glanced back at the portal spell, marveling at the range of its teleportation.

Ignoring the surrounding Cultivators, Meng Hao shot up into the sky. He did not use a flying sword or the enormous green leaf or the treasured fan, but rather his Cultivation base. His body transformed into a prismatic beam of light as he disappeared into the distance.

The seven or eight Cultivators watched as he left, their veneration for him growing.

“I wonder if I’ll ever be able to become a powerful Foundation Establishment expert....”

“Stop dreaming. Even if you did reach Foundation Establishment, at the very best you would have a Fractured Foundation. People like us can only imagine what it would be like. Only people groomed by the great Sects have a chance to get a Foundation Establishment Pill. And even amongst the great Sects, the numbers who do are few. Most people go their whole lives without even touching one.”

“Even with a Foundation Establishment Pill, people with latent talent

like ours would only have a tiny chance of succeeding. Ah, the Foundation Establishment stage... that is true power!" The Cultivators sighed. Being assigned to guard duty in this location, they rarely had a chance to see Foundation Establishment Cultivators. Seeing Meng Hao had filled their hearts with admiration and envy.

Days passed, and the entire time, Meng Hao did not use any flight-bestowing treasures, even though it forced him to waste a bit of spiritual power. He was as cautious as ever; this was the center of the Southern Domain, and he knew he had to be especially careful.

He had offended too many people from here; the Violet Fate Sect, obviously, as well as Eccentric Song and Wang Tengfei. Time passed, and soon he neared the State of Eastern Emergence. The closer he got, the more cautious he grew.

During the past months, he had attempted to use the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex almost every day. However, no matter what he did, he wasn't able to gain the enlightenment he needed. Everything seemed a blur.

Ten days after leaving the teleportation portal, Meng Hao was flying along, when suddenly his expression changed. His body trembled, and he fell out of the sky, his face pale. He hit the ground running, making a beeline for a nearby forest. He waved his hand toward a tree up ahead that was large enough for three people to encircle with their arms. The tree cracked open, sending splinters of wood out into the air. Meng Hao leaped into the fissure, immediately sitting down cross-legged. His face was turning a deep purple color, and his body was trembling. He spat out the Lightning Flag, which immediately transformed into a protective lightning mist.

He coughed up a mouthful of blood as he attempted to take control of the poison that was flaring up within him.

This time, the flareup lasted for three days. The entire time, Meng Hao sat there, his jaw clenched tight. The pain of the poison within his body felt like insects ripping his insides apart. His eyes were blood red and savage, and would have shocked anyone who could see it. Suddenly, in the

pupil of his right eye appeared a demonic face that seemed to be laughing and crying at the same time. Somehow, it also had the appearance of a blossoming flower.

Meng Hao was aware of this. More than ever, he desired to dispel the poison.

On evening of the third day, a vicious wolf wandered into the area and caught the scent of blood. It eyed the cavity in the tree where Meng Hao sat, and then shot forward. Just as it was about to reach the tree, a hand shot out from within, latching onto the wolf's neck. It squeezed.

A cracking sound could be heard. The wolf didn't even have a chance to cry out before it died. It twitched for a moment and then went still. His face pale, Meng Hao emerged from the tree. His eyes glittered, shining with an intense killing aura. Every time the poison flared up, he had a stronger desire to kill. The flickering, laughing-crying demonic face in his eye seemed to be having a strange effect on all of the Qi in his body.

Meng Hao looked down at the dead wolf he held. He flicked his hand, and the body was consumed with flames. Ash drifted out from Meng Hao's hand. The fire flickered on his face. He looked much less a scholar now, and much more a vicious Cultivator.

"In the past two years, the poison has flared up nine times. But this time was different. Why did a demonic face appear within my right eye....?" He reached up and felt his right eye. The demonic face slowly faded away. Meng Hao experimentally circulated his Cultivation base. When he did, the demonic face appeared again. His body transformed into a shining beam of light as he continued on toward the State of Eastern Emergence.

It was a large nation, about ten times larger than the State of Zhao, filled with Cultivators and Sects. The largest of the Sects was the Violet Fate Sect, which acted as the leader of the other Sects.

You could definitely say that the State of Eastern Emergence was the base of operations for the Violet Fate Sect.

Meng Hao knew this, but had no other options. Going around the nation would involve traveling a huge distance. He wanted to get the State of Blue

Clouds, where the Black Sieve Sect was, a location actually closer to where the State of Zhao had been, but which was on the other side of the State of Eastern Emergence.

Fortunately, the State of Eastern Emergence was huge, so if he was careful, it shouldn't be difficult to hide. It wasn't like the State of Zhao, which was small enough to make searching for people easy. Furthermore, he was no longer of the Qi Condensation stage. Now that he was of the Foundation Establishment stage, he could protect himself much easier. His decision made, he entered the State of Eastern Emergence.

"If I keep going on in this direction, there is a city of Cultivators." Meng Hao flew through the air, passing through the border. He wore a long, black robe and a wide bamboo hat. His eyes flickered about as he surveyed the lands of the State of Eastern Emergence. There were few mountains, mostly wide plains. There were cities of mortals scattered about everywhere, connected by trade routes that were filled with horse carts.

The hustle and bustle was far greater than that in the State of Zhao. As he flew through the air, other Foundation Establishment Cultivators flew past him, going in different directions. That was something which would be a rare sight in the State of Zhao.

There were also many Qi Condensation Cultivators. You could say that the spiritual energy throughout the State of Eastern Emergence was greater than that of some of the famous mountains within the State of Zhao. In fact, there were some places where the spiritual energy was so dense that it made Meng Hao apprehensive.

Several days later, Meng Hao finally saw a majestic city rising up in front of him on the horizon!

It would take a mortal many hours to travel one hundred kilometers, but Meng Hao arrived at the city gate in less time than it takes an incense stick to burn.

It was currently dusk, and as the sun set over the city, it looked like a gigantic coiling dragon, its head lifted up to look at the heavens.

As he approached the city, he felt a pressure pushing him down from

the sky. He landed on the ground and proceeded forward on foot, lifting his head up to gaze at the city. Even though he had seen cities before, this sight moved him. There were other Cultivators around him, some alone, some in groups of four or five.

Above, the sky was completely clear. There was a restrictive spell in place overhead that prevented flight, and the only thing that could be seen was its colorful glow. It made everything seem celestial in nature.

The gate was guarded by Cultivators of the eighth level of Qi Condensation. There were also guards on top of the city walls, and Meng Hao could see that they were of the ninth level of Qi Condensation, on the threshold of reaching Foundation Establishment.

“This is a great city of Cultivators of the Southern Domain...” As he contemplated, Meng Hao began to more fully understand the power the Violet Fate Sect wielded in this great nation.

Meng Hao looked ahead and noticed that as people entered the city gates, they paid a tax of Spirit Stones. Just as he was about to do the same, a whistling scream could be heard approaching in the air.

The sound was very sudden, causing all the Cultivators in the area to lift their heads. Off in the distance, a beam of light shot toward the city.

It was violet-colored, and roughly ten meters wide. It approached like a screaming, shooting star. In its midst was a middle-aged man wearing a splendid garment. His face was expressionless, and he flew toward the city center as if the restrictive spell emanating from within meant nothing to him.

The pressure exuded by his body sent looks of shock to appear on the faces of the Cultivators on the ground. A wind kicked up, turning into a whirlwind, which swept across the land.

“A Core Formation eccentric. Only people like that can ignore the city’s restrictive spell and fly.”

“Keep your voice down. That’s Reverend Bi Hong of the Violet Fate Sect. They say that years ago, someone from the Cloud Resemblance Sect was

disrespectful to him, so he slaughtered the entire Sect. He's cruel and ruthless."

The buzz of conversation slowly died out. Meng Hao looked off into the distance, his expression calm, but his heart pounding. Lowering his head, he entered the city.

The largest city of Cultivators he'd ever been in before was Milky Way City in the State of Zhao. Entering this great city in the State of Eastern Emergence, he felt as if his world-view had suddenly expanded. Items used in Cultivation were available everywhere, and tall buildings rose up as far as the eye could see. Qi Condensation and Foundation Establishment Cultivators bustled about, and Meng Hao even caught sight of two Core Formation Cultivators like the Reverend Bi Hong from moments ago.

Meng Hao was the only person wearing a wide bamboo hat, which actually caused many people to turn and look at him. He hesitated a moment before ducking into a random shop. When he came out, the hat was gone. His expression was calm as he walked past several more shops, and then began to walk through some snaking alleys. Suddenly, his body shot backward ten meters, and his hand shot out like lightning. It came to rest on the neck of a boy of about fifteen or sixteen years of age. Meng Hao lifted him up and pressed him against the wall.

The boy's Cultivation base was not very high, it was at about the sixth level of Qi Condensation. His body was bony, but his eyes seemed to be filled with wit and cunning. His face twisted as Meng Hao lifted him up. The boy knew that by exerting just a bit of spiritual power, Meng Hao could turn him into ash.

"Why are you following me? I'll give you one sentence to explain yourself." Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever as he held the trembling youth. The young man looked at his black robe and loose, long hair, and it seemed as if death itself were hovering in front of him.

# Chapter 106: The Day the Resurrection Lily Blooms in Seven Colors

“Sir, I can help you find the things you need in the city,” blurted the young man hurriedly. He was nervous, and fear shone in his eyes. He believed what Meng Hao had just said. He knew he would only have one chance to explain himself clearly, otherwise, he would be exterminated. It wouldn’t matter that they were within the city limits.

Meng Hao gave the young man a look. He didn’t say anything, but the young man was clever, and picked up on Meng Hao’s intention. He continued speaking.

“I’m Qiu Lin of the junior generation,” he said, the words pouring out, his heart pounding. “I was born here in Eastern Greatness City, so I know the place well. I noticed you when you entered the city; I can tell that it’s your first time here. You need someone who knows their way around to help you find what you’re looking for. I’d like to offer my services.

“Sir, for only fifty Spirit Stones, you can save yourself a lot of time. I can help you find what you need much faster.” He looked nervously at Meng Hao. He wasn’t lying; everything he’d said was the truth.

He had done this type of thing before, but this was the first time he had encountered someone like Meng Hao, who exuded such a deadly air.

Meng Hao looked over him coldly and then slowly loosened his grip. He frowned; the more the poison flared up, the stronger his killing intent seemed to grow. It seemed to be slowly affecting his personality.

Qiu Lin took in a deep breath and then said, “What is it you seek to buy, sir?”

“Poison pills,” replied Meng Hao coolly.

“Poison pills?” Qiu Lin stared in surprise. He thought for a long moment, and then his eyes glittered and he went on to provide a vivid description of this aspect of the city.



“Sir, there are not many shops in the city that specifically sell poison pills. But, poison pills are still medicinal pills, and there are lots of shops in the city that sell medicinal pills. There are two shops that could be considered the best. One of them, called the Ten Thousand Pills Pavilion, has the most variety of pills. It’s very famous, and when they have auctions, even Foundation Establishment Cultivators will attend.

“There’s another shop that’s a bit smaller, but they conduct trade with the Western Desert, so they have a lot of imported items. They say the apothecary there used to work with Grandmaster Pill Demon of the Violet Fate Sect. He was some kind of boy genius when it came to medicines.

“Which place would you like to go to, sir?”

Meng Hao thought for a moment, then said, “The Ten Thousand Pills Pavilion.” Qiu Lin nodded and led the way off. Having his help really did save Meng Hao quite a bit of time. They walked quickly through the city, and within about an hour, arrived at a seven-story pavilion. A huge stone stele had been erected next to it, upon which were written the characters ‘Ten Thousand Pills Pavilion.’

“I can’t really go inside,” said Qiu Lin. “I’ll wait out here for you, sir.” Looking around, Meng Hao noticed that there were quite a few disciples of the fifth or sixth level of Qi Condensation milling about.

With a slight nod of his head, he entered the seven-story building. As for Meng Hao, he had cast a bit of Spiritual Sense onto him, to ensure that he didn’t try anything funny.

Now that he was of the Foundation Establishment stage, he was becoming much more familiar with the usages of Spiritual Sense.

In the Ten Thousand Pills Pavilion, Qi Condensation Cultivators were restricted to the first floor. The second and third floors were for Foundation Establishment; Core Formation was the requirement to enter the fourth floor. Meng Hao walked around a bit, frowning as he glanced over the various medicinal pills.

Enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, and he left. Qiu Lin immediately stepped forward.

“Let’s go to the second place you mentioned,” said Meng Hao, continuing to frown. Qiu Lin was clever, so he didn’t ask any questions. He immediately led Meng Hao away. It was nearing evening when they finally arrived in a relatively remote part of the city, to a shop that seemed to have been there since ancient times.

“This place is small, and it has three rules,” Qiu Lin told Meng Hao. “The first rule is that you can’t enter unless you put up a deposit of fifty thousand Spirit Stones. The deposit is non-refundable, whether or not you buy anything.

“The second rule is that only one person at a time may enter. Everyone else must wait outside. Furthermore, only twenty people are allowed in each day. Once twenty people have entered, others must wait until the following day.

“The third rule is that once inside, random questions are not allowed. Every question asked must be accompanied with a payment of Spirit Stones.”

Meng Hao stared in surprise for a moment, before understanding showed in his eyes. He walked forward. He hated to lose Spirit Stones, but if it led to being able to dispel the poison, then it would be worth it.

The door of the shop was closed. On it hung a plaque with the number 18 written on it.

Meng Hao settled his Qi and calmed his mind, then stood there quietly. Qiu Lin stood next to him. Finally, when the sun was about to drop over the horizon, the door creaked open and a middle-aged man walked out. A frown was on his face, and he didn’t even look at Meng Hao and Qiu Lin. He walked out, turned, and then clasped hands and bowed to the old man who had shown him out.

When he saw the middle-aged man, Meng Hao’s eyes narrowed and he lowered his head. He had seen this man before. It was none other than Reverend Bi Hong, whom he had seen flying through the sky earlier in the day.

The old man who stood in the shop door was of the late Foundation

Establishment stage. For a Core Formation eccentric to salute him in such a manner was very unusual.

Reverend Bi Hong turned and then transformed into a colorful beam of light that shot off into the air. A screaming whistle echoed out, after which the old man in the shop looked at Meng Hao.

Without hesitation, Meng Hao produced a bag of holding, inside of which were fifty thousand spirit stones. He respectfully handed it over.

The old man accepted it with a slight nod, then turned and entered the shop. Meng Hao followed him, glancing back as the door closed behind him. The number on the plaque changed from 18 to 19.

The shop wasn't very large. There were no shelves. Instead, there were seven pill furnaces of various sizes, two long tables, and an oil lamp. The light was relatively dim, although to Cultivators, this didn't matter; they could see everything clearly.

"How can I help you?" said the old man coolly, sitting cross-legged behind one of the long tables.

Meng Hao said nothing, instead slapping his bag of holding to produce a jade vial. He pushed it across the table toward the old man.

The old man picked it up and opened it, then gazed at it closely. He lowered his head and sniffed it, then tipped it over. Blood flowed out onto the surface of the table.

The jade vial contained a sizeable amount of blood, which Meng Hao had extracted from his body.

"Interesting," said the old man, his voice low. He stared at the blood on the table. He lifted his hand, and a long, silver needle appeared. He dragged it through the blood, and immediately, the needle began to glow. Then, in the blink of an eye, it began to melt with rot. In an instant, it had turned into bits of ash, which floated out in the air.

The old man's eyes glistened. He smacked the table with his left hand, causing the blood to fly up into the air, where it congealed into a globule. He then smacked his bag of holding, and a withered seed appeared. He

flicked his finger, and the seed merged into the globule of blood.

The blood instantly began to contract, and soon was gone. The seed was no longer withered, but rather, plump and nearly bursting. As it floated in the air, it slowly began to sprout.

Meng Hao watched with rapt attention as all of this happened, growing more and more nervous. He had spent a lot of Spirit Stones, all to attempt to dispel the poison.

The seed sprouted, forming into a long branch, upon which a single leaf grew. The leaf eventually grew into a flower. As soon as the flower appeared, the old man's face went pale. Meng Hao's eyes narrowed.

The petals of the flower were three different colors: yellow, blue and red, interlocking with each other. The flower itself had the appearance of a demonic face that was laughing and crying at the same time. The demonic-face-flower floated there in the air, seemingly alive. It was extremely bizarre.

"A three-colored Resurrection Lily..." said the old man in a hoarse voice. He stared at the flower, his eyes shining.

"When this poison flares up three times, it forms a complete cycle. After three cycles, the flower will bloom. After it blooms, a demonic face that seems to be both laughing and crying will appear in your right eye. It will come and go depending on your usage of your Cultivation base. If you circulate your Cultivation base for a long time, it will grow more clear. At this stage, the poison will not injure you, and in fact will protect you from all manner of other poisons. However, your desire to kill will grow stronger.

"After three more cycles, the flower will bloom again, and when the poison flares up, another demonic face will appear in your left eye. At this point, your desire to kill will be even stronger. You will become incredibly bloodthirsty. At this point, not only will you be immune to a vast array of poisons, you will begin to emanate a poisoned miasma. Your flesh will become incredibly tough, and you will be more resilient than the average Cultivator.

“However, you will find that your body is also becoming more and more stiff. Your agility will be reduced, and your life force will slowly become dim. You will often be surrounded by a Death Qi.

“After this, the flower will bloom a third time,” said the man, his voice filled with profundity. “Your... your mind will be lost, your life will be gone. Your body will transform into a three-colored Resurrection Lily. The person who planted the seed in you will come to pick the flower. Sometime after the transformation, you will turn into a four-colored Resurrection Lily.

“Mortal, Qi Condensation, Foundation Establishment, Core Formation, Nascent Soul, Spirit Severing, Seeking the Dao. Seven stages, seven colors, one for each stage. Eventually, the Resurrection Lily will bloom in seven colors. When that happens, the flower shall descend, the person who planted the seed will achieve Immortal Ascension within one thousand years.

“In ancient times, Cultivators used this flower in order to achieve Immortal Ascension.” The old man gazed at Meng Hao.

Hearing the man’s word caused him to shiver, not from cold, but from fear. He frowned as he thought about everything the man had said regarding the poison.

“Fellow Daoist, please, don’t joke with me. I have ordinary latent talent, and no special treasures that people are pursuing. It wouldn’t be worth it for an enemy to plot against me with such a rare flower.”

The old man looked at him with a smile, but said nothing.

Meng Hao was silent for a moment, then produced another bag of holding which he placed down in front of the old man. The man nodded.

“Young friend, what you said is both correct and incorrect,” said the old man slowly. “This three-colored Resurrect Flower is not complete; it’s defective. It won’t bloom past three colors. Otherwise, no one in the world would be able to dispel it for you.

“How can I dispel it?” When the man didn’t respond, Meng Hao threw

over another bag of holding.

Meanwhile outside the shop, the stars and moon had appeared in the evening sky and lanterns were being lit throughout the city. A woman appeared in the distance, dressed in a long, sleeveless white garment.

She was incredibly beautiful. Graceful and slender, her appearance underneath the moonlight was like that of a celestial being. She looked cool, calm and very refined. Her appearance was beyond ordinary in every aspect. As the lamplight filled the city, she walked up to the shop. When she saw the number 19 on the plaque on the door, a slight smile appeared on her face that caused Qiu Lin's heart to race.

Meng Hao himself had seen this woman before, in the Reliance Sect. She had accompanied Wang Tengfei when he left the sect. This was ... Wang Tengfei's fiancé.

Chu Yuyan.

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The name Resurrection Lily is based on a real plant, although I doubt its appearance in real life is anything like how it's supposed to look in ISSTH.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lycoris\\_radiata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lycoris_radiata)

# Chapter 107: Spring and Autumn tree

“There are three methods to deal with this poison,” said the old man, collecting the bag of holding. “The third method is to simply alleviate the pain caused by the poison. There are three types of Spirit Fruit that you can eat which will have this effect.

“A second method can be used to suppress the effects of the poison and also reduce the frequency of the flareups. For this, you need a Spring and Autumn tree. One tree can suppress the poison for one year. By the way, this type of tree is actually capable of doing more than just suppressing a vast variety of poisons. It’s very rare, but not impossible to acquire. The only down side is that using it will cause the poisoning will deepen. Also that the rebound effect is severe; if the time comes when you cannot suppress the poison any more, it will erupt violently, and you will be unable to dispel it.

“As for completely eliminating the poison, and this is the first method, it’s actually quite simple. Find someone of the senior generation who is in the Spirit Severing stage. They can easily eliminate the poison for you using the power of the Spirit Severing stage.

“Very well, seeing how readily you spend such quantities of Spirit Stones, I might as well tell you of a fourth method. If you somehow have the good fortune to acquire a Poison Dispelling Pill personally concocted by Grandmaster Pill Demon, then you could use it to completely eliminate the poison.

“However,” said the old man calmly, “Grandmaster Pill Demon holds a lofty position in the Violet Fate Sect. It would be very difficult.”

Meng Hao thought for a moment, then without another word, pulled out another bag of holding. He cared a lot about Spirit Stones, but they were simple material possessions which could not compare to the value of his own life.

The old man accepted the bag of holding, eyes glittering, and a smile appeared on his face.

“I know what question you’re going to ask.”

“Where can I buy it!” asked Meng Hao coldly, his expression grim.

“There’s no way for outsiders to know about this, yet. But considering my status, I’m special, so I happen to have heard the news. In a month, a trading caravan from the Western Desert will arrive here. When they do, the Hundred Treasures Pavilion will host an auction. One of the items they will be selling is Spring and Autumn tree.

“Hundred Treasures Pavilion?” Meng Hao’s eyes flashed as he thought back to the Hundred Treasures Pavilion in Eastern Refinement City in the State of Zhao.

Meng Hao stood, and with a last glance at the old man, turned and walked to the door. When he opened it, the first thing he saw was a refined, beautiful woman. Their eyes met for a brief moment.

“Middle Foundation Establishment stage!” thought Meng Hao. His face showed nothing as he walked forward. The woman in white’s expression was normal. As Meng Hao left, she walked into the shop. As she did, her brow furrowed slightly, and she looked back at Qiu Lin and Meng Hao as they walked off.

“He seems familiar, but I can’t remember where I’ve seen him before.” Chu Yuyan didn’t pay much more attention to it. The year she had seen Meng Hao on the top of the East Mountain of the Reliance Sect, he had only been at the sixth level of Qi Condensation. Even though he had snatched away Wang Tengfei’s chance at joining the Inner Sect, Chu Yuyan hadn’t paid much attention to him at all. Six years had passed since then, and she had long since forgotten about him.

She had forgotten Meng Hao, but he hadn’t forgotten her!

Meng Hao couldn’t possibly forget the middle-aged Dao Protector who had stood there that night. Neither could he forget the woman who had seemed to be on such intimate terms with Wang Tengfei.

“That was definitely her....” Meng Hao walked faster, his expression cold, but his thoughts racing. Based on her reaction, she hadn’t recognized him.



In any case, he had changed a lot recently, especially in terms of his Cultivation base. It would be difficult for anyone to connect the current Meng Hao with the old one.

“I was a nobody back then. She seemed so close with Wang Tengfei; she must be the disciple of a great Sect. I wouldn’t have made any sort of impression on her. But her Cultivation base is in the middle of the Foundation Establishment stage. I wonder... I wonder what Wang Tengfei’s Cultivation base is like nowadays?” He thought back to everything that had happened that year, and barely perceptible cold smile appeared on his face.

Qiu Lin walked beside him, looking thoughtful. He looked back, and then suddenly stopped walking.

“Now I know! That was Chu Yuyan!” he said.

“Chu Yuyan?” asked Meng Hao, his expression flickering as he looked back at Qiu Lin. “You mean the woman back there?”

“Yeah,” said Qiu Lin excitedly. “She’s a Chosen from the Violet Fate Sect, and also one of the Four Great Beauties of the Southern Domain. That was definitely her!”

“Oh?” Meng Hao’s eyes glittered.

“According to the rumors,” gushed Qiu Lin, “when she was born, a celestial lotus bloomed. Her latent talent is incredible, and her beauty is extraordinary. She was taken in by Grandmaster Pill Demon as a personal disciple! Her beloved, Wang Tengfei, is a Chosen from the great Wang Clan. The year they got engaged, the entire Southern Domain was talking about it.” He might be well-informed about the affairs within the Southern Domain, but as he spoke, he didn’t notice the look which appeared in Meng Hao’s eyes.

They continued on, and Qiu Lin proceeded to talk about various matters related to Chu Yuyan. At Meng Hao’s request, he led him to an inn in a far corner of the city. Meng Hao asked him a few questions regarding the auction and then paid the Spirit Stones he owed. By the time Qiu Lin left, it was late at night.

Meng Hao sat cross-legged in his room in the inn, his eyes twinkling. His mind was filled with the various things Qiu Lin had told him about Chu Yuyan. Enough time passed for two incense sticks to burn. He frowned.

“I wonder if there is some way to use Chu Yuyan to get Grandmaster Pill Demon to make me a Poison-Dispelling Pill...” When he thought about Grandmaster Pill Demon, he couldn’t help but think about Ding Yan’s Foundation Establishment Pill.

“Ding Yan was also a disciple of Grandmaster Pill Master...” Meng Hao laughed bitterly. He had killed the man’s disciples, and also offended the Violet Fate Sect. Dispelling the poison in that way would be very difficult.

After a while, he began to meditate. Meng Hao had found that after reaching Foundation Establishment, he needed larger amounts of spiritual energy, much more so than he’d needed in the Qi Condensation stage. In order to reach the middle of the Foundation Establishment stage, he would need to form four Dao Pillars.

“Right now I only have one Dao Pillar. Because of the crack on the Dao Pillar, I have a Flawless Foundation. Plus, I established my Foundation after reaching the thirteenth level of Qi Condensation. Furthermore, my Cultivation is based on the Sublime Spirit Scripture, making my Dao Pillar gold colored. My enlightenment is deeper, and I have much more Spiritual Sense. I don’t think that many people in the early stage of Foundation Establishment would be my match.

“I’ve never fought someone of the middle stage of Foundation Establishment, so I’m not sure, but I think I could hold my own.” His eyes shone as he thought of his match with the burly man surnamed Shan. At that time, he had come to have a much better understanding of the power of his Flawless Foundation. When the time came to form his second Dao Pillar, he would be prepared.

“I need some medicinal pills suitable for the early Foundation Establishment stage,” he said, taking a deep breath. He closed his eyes and spit out the Lightning Flag. A field of lightning mist sprang up, within which arcs of electricity sparkled. If anyone tried to make a move against

him, they would immediately shoot out to protect him.

Within the mist, Meng Hao once again attempted to use the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex, and once again failed. However, with each of his failed attempts, he seemed to grow closer to enlightenment.

The night passed uneventfully. As dawn broke the next morning, Meng Hao opened his eyes. He left the inn to explore this city of Cultivators in the State of Eastern Emergence. He wanted to find some medicinal pills suitable for Foundation Establishment, and hopefully learn something about the Spring and Autumn tree.

Half a month passed, during which time he explored almost all of the shops in the city. This place was filled with an incredible variety of medicinal pills and magical items. However, the prices were very high. After considering his options for a long time, Meng Hao purchased a common medicinal pill which was useful during the Foundation Establishment stage.

This pill was called Massed Establishment Pill, and was suitable for the early Foundation Establishment stage.

“There are quite a bit of pills that are suitable for the Foundation Establishment stage, but it seems that their efficacy is just ordinary. The really high-quality medicinal pills are exclusively available from various Sects. It’s hard for outsiders to get their hands on them. The only chance to even see them would be during an auction.”

Another half month passed. Meng Hao had grown much more familiar with the city. At the moment, he sat in the restaurant of his inn, next to a window, looking down at the throngs of people below. In his hand was a cup of alcohol, which he sipped as he thought.

“I’ve consumed far too many medicinal pills over the years. I’ve pushed my Cultivation base with a quantity of pills far exceeding the average person.” He frowned. It’s not that the city didn’t have pills suitable for the Foundation Establishment stage, or that the prices were too high. It was a problem of the five medallions.

In the city there were five types of medallions available that determined

who could have the chance to buy certain products. Without one of the medallions, even if you had the money to buy certain items, you couldn't. That was the rule in the city, and also the way that the Violet Fate Sect could control the distribution of medicinal pills within the country.

"Five types of medallions. The only way to acquire one is to do some sort of meritorious service. So annoying!" Meng Hao lifted up the cup of alcohol and took another drink. His frown deepened.

"Thankfully I don't need a medallion to participate in the auction. As long as I have enough Spirit Stones to pay the entrance fee, I can get in." Meng Hao's gaze swept the street below. As he muttered to himself, time passed. Soon, the inn's restaurant began to fill with Cultivators, who chatted and exchanged information.

Qiu Lin had selected a relatively well-known inn for Meng Hao. Here, they only served drinks. In fact, they only served one kind of drink, which was called Savor the Spirit.

The flavor of this alcohol was quite unique; it didn't burn going down. It was very strong, but was infused with spiritual energy. It wasn't a lot of spiritual energy, but it was enough to make the alcohol quite expensive.

"I heard that the trade caravan from the Western Desert arrived today. They brought way more people with them than they did in past years. I bet there's going to be a lot of treasures up for grabs at the Hundred Treasures Pavilion auction."

"There aren't as many resources in the Western Desert as there are in the Southern Domain, but they have a lot of very unique material that we really need here. When they show up every few years, they usually bring representatives from around a hundred different merchant groups and a variety of Sects from different nations. The techniques of their Cultivators are very strange. I hope we have a chance to learn something from them."

"I don't think so. They've obviously brought more people than usual. There has to be a reason for that. I'd say there's an eighty to ninety percent chance it has something to do with the corpse of that Immortal." The sound of voices filled the restaurant, and most of them were

discussing the auction which was to take place in half a month, and how it related to the arrival of the Western Desert trade caravan.

Meng Hao was getting ready to make his departure. The trade caravan didn't interest him. However, when he heard mention of the corpse of an Immortal, his eyes flashed, and he sat back down and poured himself another cup of alcohol. He took a drink and continued to listen.

"The Immortal's corpse... heh heh, it's been a bloodbath over there recently. Three years ago, the five great Sects and the three great Clans tried to force their way into the area, but were met with failure after failure. They had no choice but to back off."

"The Immortal's corpse must have fallen out from the heavens that year because it wanted to enter the Rebirth Cave, one of the Southern Domain's three Danger Zones. And yet for some reason, it landed about a thousand meters away from it. Actually, it didn't just provoke a reaction from the five great Sects and three great Clans. The strange things that exist within the Rebirth Cave also have been emerging occasionally."

"Everyone wants a piece of the Immortal's body. Even just a bit of it would increase anyone's hope of achieving Immortal Ascension!" As Meng Hao listened to the buzz of conversation in the restaurant, a strange look appeared in his eyes. He thought back to the time in the State of Zhao when the land had continued to shake over and over again. He had gotten the feeling that something from the Heavens had fallen down to smash into the earth.

"You know what I heard? When the Immortal's corpse fell down, some people saw it with their own eyes. They said its pupils were gray, and that inside, seven stars glittered!" When Meng Hao heard this, he was just lifting his cup up to take another drink. Suddenly, a tremor ran through his body, and his hand began to tremble, spilling alcohol out all over.

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If you want to re-experience the introduction of Chu Yuyan and Wang Xifan, you can re-read chapter 35.

If you want to refresh your mind about the Hundred Treasures Pavilion,

as well as Meng Hao's flirtatious encounter there, you can re-read chapter 53.

If you are confused regarding Meng Hao's reaction to hearing about the gray pupils and seven stars, you might want to re-read chapter 59.

If you want a reminder of what happened when the corpse fell from the sky, you can re-read chapter 61.

# Chapter 108: The Secret Struggle Begins

The restaurant was filled with all sorts of people, so no one noticed Meng Hao's strange behavior. He slowly put down his cup of alcohol. His expression was as calm as ever, but his heart had suddenly begun pounding, and a roaring sound filled his head.

He silently turned his head to look at the person who had mentioned the seven stars in the eyes of the corpse of the Immortal. Then he lowered his head and took another drink.

"You know what, it's weird. That Immortal is dead, but it's body still exudes a powerful pressure which caused all kinds of strange phenomena. The great Sects and Clans could only approach to a distance of one hundred meters."

"I heard that recently the great Clans and Sects made some special preparations and were able to approach closer than one hundred meters." The discussions continued until midday, whereupon people began to disperse. The person who had mentioned the seven stars stood up. Chatting and laughing with his companion, he made to leave.

It was at this moment that Meng Hao lightly tapped the table. The tap emitted a roaring boom, which sent a tremor through the bodies of the nearby Cultivators. Their expressions changed as they all turned to look at Meng Hao.

His Cultivation base suddenly emitted the massive pressure of Foundation Establishment, enveloping the restaurant. Then it dissipated. However, in that brief moment, the bodies of the eighth and ninth level Qi Condensation Cultivators trembled. Their faces grew pale, and their hearts flip-flopped as they tried to remember whether or not they had said something to offend this Foundation Establishment expert.

"Elder generation...." One by one, they saluted, their hearts were filled with veneration. They knew that fighting was prohibited within the city limits, so this person wouldn't attack someone lightly. But to them, the mighty pressure exuded by a Foundation Establishment Cultivator was

incredibly powerful, and caused dread to well up inside of them.

“You,” said Meng Hao, pointing at one of the people. “Come here.” It was a young man who looked to be about twenty-seven or twenty-eight years old. He was at the eighth level of Qi Condensation. When Meng Hao pointed at him, his body began to shake and the blood drained from his face.

“Elder generation....” Fear filled his eyes, and confusion his heart. He had never seen Meng Hao before and had no idea how he had attracted his attention. The other Cultivators surrounding him quickly slipped away from the restaurant, letting out sighs of relief in their hearts.

Face expressionless, Meng Hao took another drink. The young man hesitated, not daring to refuse to approach. Reverently and cautiously, he took a few steps forward.

Meng Hao lifted his head and looked at him. “You just said that the corpse of that Immortal had gray eyes, within which were seven stars. Is what you said true?”

“Sir, allow me to explain,” said the young man quickly, not daring to leave anything out. “I didn’t see the matter with my own eyes, I only heard about it. However, I have a good friend who really did observe the whole thing personally.”

“And where exactly is this good friend of yours?” said Meng Hao, his voice low.

“I haven’t seen him for half a year,” he replied quickly, worried Meng Hao would think he was making things up if he took too long to respond. “He’s a Water Bamboo Sect disciple named Xu Yan.”

Meng Hao frowned and nodded, waving his hand dismissively. The young man bowed respectfully, and then left as fast as possible, heaving a sigh of relief. He decided that he would never again return to this place again.

Meng Hao sat there thinking. There weren’t many people left in the restaurant, and all of them were of the Qi Condensation stage. Having



seen what just occurred, they all paid their bill and left, one by one. Soon the restaurant was empty.

“Gray pupils with seven stars. Could the corpse of that Immortal and the animated skeleton I saw in the whirlpool above the Tower of Tang in the State of Zhao... be one and the same?!” Meng Hao sat there, contemplating the skeleton he’d seen and the sense of calamity he’d felt. The more he thought about, the more it seemed that some complicated matters were unfolding behind the scenes.

“If I want to confirm it, I’ll have to see the corpse with my own eyes....” After a while, he returned to his room. The matter of the Immortal’s corpse was now a heavy weight on his heart. He had the sinking sensation that the reason the corpse had fallen to the earth... was he himself.

Meng Hao spent the next half-month trying to gather more information about the corpse of the Immortal. As he did, he slowly came to have a much better understanding of all the momentous events which had occurred in the past two or three years because of it.

“The year the corpse fell, it immediately aroused the attention of the five great Sects and three great clans of the Southern Domain. One after another, they attempted to reach the corpse, but could never get closer than a thousand meters. Plus, they encountered problems with the strangeness from within the Rebirth Cave.

“They made further attempts, even using various Sect treasures, and were eventually able to get as close as one hundred meters.... The most momentous thing that happened was half a year ago. The Solitary Sword Sect used their Dao Reserve to break past the one hundred meter mark. They were able to get two drops of blood from the corpse!

“One of the drops was purchased by the Violet Fate Sect for an exorbitant price. The other was taken back to the Solitary Sword Sect to be used to gain enlightenment regarding the meaning of Immortality.” Meng Hao sat cross-legged in his room, recording all of the information onto a jade slip. He had come across all this information at the cost of some Spirit Stones.

“There were even some Cultivators from the Great Tang in the Eastern Lands who came to investigate.... People from the Western Desert have also arrived. The corpse came to be called an Immortal’s corpse, and has sent shockwaves throughout the entire Cultivation world.” Meng Hao was quiet for a moment. He put the jade slip away and then left the inn, his eyes glittering.

In the past month, and everyone in this city of Cultivators was talking about the upcoming auction. Meng Hao had already gone to the Hundred Treasures Pavilion to pay his deposit and get his auction medallion.

At the moment, he strode down the street. After passing through a few alleys, his robe became black. He put on his wide bamboo hat and covered his face with a mask. Lately, more and more people dressed in a similar fashion. With the auction just around the corner, there were many people who didn’t want their personal affairs to be made known, and thus went about in disguise.

Soon, Meng Hao reached the area where the auction was to be held. It was a large, circular public square. Numerous restrictive spells could be seen, causing glowing magical symbols to fill the air.

Numerous Cultivators patrolled about on guard duty, ten of whom were at Foundation Establishment stage. Four Cultivators floated cross-legged in the air above the auction stage, their bodies glowing. The pressure they exuded around the area was that of the Core Formation stage.

This was just the guard force that was visible. To organize an auction of this scale would require the support of Nascent Soul Cultivators. A Nascent Soul Cultivator could strike fear into the heart of an entire city. But even in the five great Sects and three great Clans of the Southern Domain, Nascent Soul Cultivators were rare.

Any Nascent Soul Cultivator would be referred to as Patriarch, and would usually spend time in secluded meditation. Usually, Core Formation Cultivators would be the ones to leave the Sect to handle matters.

Most of the people attending the auction were from the State of Eastern Emergence. Also present were Cultivators from surrounding nations, who

had traveled here for the sole purpose of participating in the auction. Everyone who entered the auction square had an auction plaque. By the time Meng Hao arrived, there were already several hundred people present. More continued to stream in.

Meng Hao had paid for a seat at the very far edge. He sat down cross-legged in his position, looking coldly at the stage and the square. Above the main square were three levels of private booths, arranged, not for Cultivators with high Cultivation bases, but for Cultivators with high positions.

Looking around at the Cultivators around him, he saw a group who were clearly much taller than everyone else. They wore less clothing, and in fact, many parts of their bodies were encircled with iron hoops. Their skin was dark, and most of them had blue eyes.

Each and every one of them were big and tall, their hair wild. From their strange clothing and iron hoops, it was obvious that they weren't from the Southern Domain. These were Cultivators from the Western Desert.

Time passed, two hours. Soon, when the auction square was filled with nearly a thousand people, the sound of a bell rang out. The bustle and noise died down, and everything grew quiet.

At the same time, a blinding, multi-colored glow appeared in the middle of the auction stage. It expanded out to cover the entire auction square.

As the glow expanded out, a man appeared on the stage, seemingly from nowhere. He was old, and wore a long, expansive robe. His hair was white, and he had an ancient look. He gazed about with gleaming eyes, causing quite a commotion amongst the surrounding Cultivators.

"It's Sir Qiao from the Hundred Treasures Pavilion!"

"So, Sir Qiao is going to personally preside over the auction. He's in the middle of the Core Formation stage. He's not from the Southern Domain. He came here several years ago from the coastal islands in the Milky Way Sea."

Discussions rippled out, after which the old man on the stage coughed

lightly. Then he spoke, his voice filling the entire auction square.

“There shall be one hundred items auctioned today,” he said coolly. “They include medicinal pills, magical items, Legacies, heavenly materials and earthly treasures, materials from the Western Desert, treasures of the Southern Domain, and valuables from the Milky Way Sea. I don’t need to waste time stating the rules of the auction. Lot 1 is a thousand-year-old conch shell from the Milky Way Sea!” A woman appeared behind him, seemingly out of nowhere. She was lithe and beautiful, and had an air of extreme confidence. She carried a jade tray, upon which was a black conch shell, about the size of a hand.

The conch shell was covered with numerous lines, which ran and interlocked randomly across its surface. It glimmered as if it contained secrets of the Heavens and the Dao. As soon as it appeared, a mysterious, celestial sound filled the air in the auction square.

“This treasure is a thousand years old, and emits a celestial sound,” said Sir Qiao. The auction square went quiet. “The veins that run through the shell are magical in nature. By imbuing them with Spiritual Sense for three days, you can add half of a sixty-year-cycle to your longevity. There is no reserve price for this item.” As soon as he finished talking, the auction square erupted with conversations.

A treasure that could increase longevity could cause quite a sensation, and even fighting. Even many of the people in the private booths were shocked. It seemed this day’s auction would be quite an affair.

Even though he was far away from the auction stage, Meng Hao’s attention was focused on the composed young woman. An expression of shock covered his face as he realized he recognized her. This was the woman who had flirted with him in the Hundred Treasures Pavilion in Eastern Refinement City. Her name was Qiao Ling.

“How could she be here?” he thought. “The State of Zhao disappeared a long time ago.... Maybe she left before all the momentous events. After all, there’s a Hundred Treasures Pavilion in this city too.”

At the moment, Chu Yuyan stood in one of the private booths in the first

level, looking down at the auction square. Next to her stood a middle-aged man, a respectful look on his face.

“Fellow Daoist Chu, the Spring and Autumn tree that you need is here. Unfortunately, the rules of our Pavilion cannot be broken. If you need it, you must acquire it through auction. It is lot 39 on the auction list.”

# Chapter 109: The Legend of Doom

A thousand-year-old conch shell from the Milky Way Sea, capable of increasing the longevity of a Cultivator. Longevity is priceless. Long life is important to anyone; it is a thirst which springs from the soul itself.

This is especially true for Cultivators, even more so for those who are reaching the end of their years. To add half of a sixty-year-cycle to their life, they would pay almost any price.

The fact that this was the first item up for auction led to quite a buzz. People immediately began calling out bids, both from the ring of private booths up above, and from the throng of nearly a thousand down below. The prices being called out for the thousand-year-old conch shell grew higher and higher, until it reached a level that left Meng Hao somewhat apprehensive.

In the end, someone in the second level of private booths purchased it. Even though no one in the crowd below had been able to purchase it, their spirits were lifted by the purchase. When the second, third and fourth items appeared, the atmosphere grew even more exciting, and the prices called out even higher.

This was the first time Meng Hao had attended an auction like this, and also his first time seeing the unbridled excitement of Cultivators. His mind slowly grew clear, and he looked coldly around as the Cultivators called out price after higher price for the items they wished to purchase.

“Lot 8 is an item that many Fellow Daoists have traveled here specifically to purchase...” said Sir Qiao coolly. He flourished his right hand, and behind him, Qiao Ling appeared with yet another item on a jade tray.

It was a fragment of black bone. Its edges were jagged, and it appeared to be a piece of a skull. There were complicated magical symbols carved into it and it emanated an ancient, ghastly Qi. The Qi was sealed by a small shield produced by the jade tray.

Even still, some of the Qi drifted out, filling the auction square with what

seemed to be the stench of rotten flesh, accumulated over many years. Everyone present felt an ancient aura, filled with a wild, indescribable grief.

“One of the three Danger Zones in the Southern Domain is the Ancient Temple of Doom! The Doom Clan arose in ancient times, and did not meet with the approval of the Heavens. The Heavenly Dao cursed them, and thus, they died. But their spirits were not willing to pass away, so they defied the Heavens to create their temple!

“It’s hard to say how many years have passed since that time. The temple has become a Danger Zone, filled with incredible peril. Even Nascent Soul Cultivators will have a hard time making it out alive. However, inside the temple is an ancient Legacy, ancient Spirit medicines, and ancient treasures. A few years ago, one of the Solitary Sword Clan’s elders made it out alive, raving about the Long Life Pill he’d seen!

“I am pleased to represent the Hundred Treasures Pavilion in auctioning this item, which comes directly from the Ancient Temple of Doom. It has the power to ward against evil.” When he finished speaking, everything was quiet. However, it didn’t take long for people to begin bidding.

“Three-hundred thousand Spirit stones!”

“Five-hundred thousand Spirit stones. That item can ward against evil. If I go into the Ancient Temple of Doom, I’m dead for sure. But, I’m reaching the end of my longevity. With that item, maybe I can enter the Temple!”

“Six-hundred thousand Spirit Stones! I’m determined to get this item!”

As he listened to the price going up, Meng Hao’s eyes flickered. He had read about the three Danger Zones of the Southern Domain. But he only knew some general information, nothing specific. Now he knew a little bit more of the Ancient Temple of Doom, thanks to Sir Qiao.

“The three Danger Zones; the Rebirth Cave, the Ancient Temple of Doom, and the Primordial Dao Lake....” Meng Hao watched on as the bids on the item from the Ancient Temple of Doom slowly increased. After a while, he closed his eyes. He wasn’t interested at all in this particular item.

Time passed by as item after item was auctioned off. Finally, Sir Qiao's voice rang out.

"Lot 38 is a bottle of Refined Establishment Pills, six in total. Personally concocted by Grandmaster Pill Demon, these pills are suitable for Cultivators of the Foundation Establishment stage. The reserve price is thirty thousand. The bidding shall be in increments of at least ten thousand." Meng Hao's eye snapped open.

Some of the previous auction items had included medicinal pills. However, the prices had been too high, or not appropriate for his level. The treasures had been similar. But this Refined Establishment Pill was the least expensive item to appear so far.

"Forty thousand Spirit Stones." Qi Condensation Cultivators made up the largest percent of participants, and after that was the Foundation Establishment stage. The number of people who made bids previous hadn't been very large, but for this item, many people began to call out prices.

"Fifty thousand Spirit Stones!"

"I'll bid eighty thousand Spirit Stones. I need those Refined Establishment Pills. Please, Fellow Daoists, for the sake of the Cloud Peak Sect, allow me to take them."

"One hundred thousand!" said Meng Hao, his eyes flashing. He also needed these medicinal pills. The instant he opened his mouth, the Cultivator who had just spoken turned around. His eyes flicked back and forth; there were too many people present, so it was impossible for him to determine who had spoken.

"One hundred ten thousand!" he said coldly.

"One hundred fifty thousand!" Meng Hao didn't care a bit about the other Cultivator trying to figure out who he was. As soon as he spoke, the man's gaze fell upon him.

This Cultivator from the Cloud Peak Sect was also at the early Foundation Establishment stage. He stared murderously at Meng Hao,



clenching his teeth. “Two hundred thousand!” he said. No one else was willing to bid further. The pill was extraordinary, but two hundred thousand Spirit Stones was more than most of them could afford.

Meng Hao frowned. He needed this type of pill, but in actuality, only needed one. Also, he had no way to know how high the price for the Spring and Autumn tree would reach. Compared to that, the pill wasn’t very important. Therefore, he decided to give up.

“Lot 39 is a Spring and Autumn tree. This type of wood is not very common. It can suppress ten thousand types of poison, and can be refined into the primary ingredient required to make a variety of magical items. This is the first time I’ve personally auctioned off this item. As such, I would like to share some classified information with all of you Fellow Daoists.

“Spring and Autumn tree is created when normal wood is struck by Spring and Autumn Lightning. It cannot be produced by people, and only appears in accordance with the luck of the Heavens. Many of you probably know this already. This tree has no root, so if you place it into the earth, it will not grow. However, according to legend, this timber has a parent tree in the netherworld, the World Tree!” His words caused an uproar in the auction square. Hearing the word World Tree even caused the Cultivators in the private booths to look down in shock.

“Sir Qiao,” rang out a voice from one of the private books, “is this World Tree you mention the one from the legends, which leads to beyond the Heavens?”

“Correct,” said Sir Qiao, his expression calm. “Its shape is like that of an ox, its bark is easily peeled off, and when this happens, the ribbon-like strand looks like a yellow snake. Its leaves are like a net. Its fruit is like that of a golden rain tree and its trunk is like an elm tree. Its name is the World Tree.

“In ancient times there was a legend of an almighty power which had the potential to replace the stars within the sky. The sky was above it, and the stars outside of it. But the World Tree did not agree to be placed

beneath the sky. It exploded, and its body disseminated amongst the stars. However, its will remained within the earth. During the seasons of Spring and Autumn, Heavenly lightning will fall to destroy it; to protect itself, it creates the Spring and Autumn tree.

“Dark green leaves, a purple trunk. Black flowers and yellow fruit. There is no sound beneath its canopy, nor are shadows cast. Of course, these are just rumours that I’ve heard, I’m not sure if they are true or false. The opening bid for the Spring and Autumn tree will begin at one hundred thousand Spirit Stones.” Sir Qiao’s words made many who hadn’t previously been interested in the Spring and Autumn tree to suddenly be very interested.

Meng Hao frowned. Before, he was confident in being able to control the price of the tree, but now, with so many people interested in it, he would surely have to pay a much higher price.

He looked up at Sir Qiao standing there on the auction stage. His face was expressionless, but Meng Hao could clearly sense how shrewd and ruthless he was.

Also frowning was Chu Yuyan, up in the top level of private booths. Her delicate brow furrowed, and she sighed inwardly. She realized she had been a bit rash. The Hundred Treasures Pavilion had intentionally done this after she made her inquiries. Presumably, they also knew why she needed this particular tree.

In the auction square, multiple people began calling out bids.

“One-hundred fifty thousand!”

“Two-hundred thousand!”

“Two-hundred thirty thousand!”

As for Meng Hao, he sat there watching as the price went up; he held his hand.

“Two-hundred sixty thousand! That’s as far as I can go. It might be able to suppress poisons, but it’s a consumable item. I don’t need it because of some so-called World Tree. I need it to dispel poison.” The polite words

were spoken by a soft-spoken Cultivator wearing a long black robe. He saluted the surrounding Cultivators with clasped hands.

It was at this point that Chu Yuyan spoke up. “Three-hundred thousand!” Her clear voice rang out, causing many people to look up, although they weren’t entirely sure who had spoken.

“Three-hundred twenty thousand!” said the other Cultivator, his heart thumping. He clenched his teeth and looked up at the ring of private booths. All the people up there were famous figures from throughout the State of Eastern Emergence, and were not to be offended easily. But, he couldn’t give up.

“Three-hundred fifty thousand!” said Chu Yuyan coolly. Some people down below were now able to tell where the voice was coming from, and they looked at the top level of private booths. However, most of the Cultivators still hadn’t determined where the voice was coming from.

The black-robed Cultivator’s face twitched. Finally, he let out a bitter laugh. Three-hundred twenty thousand Spirit Stones was his limit, and it included quite a bit borrowed from other people. Although, that was of secondary importance. What gave him greater reason to abandon the competition was the identity of the other party. Although he hadn’t been able to identify the exact location of the person who was bidding against him, considering it had come from the top level of private booths, he knew that it must be someone he couldn’t afford to provoke.

He sat down bitterly, not making another bid.

Everyone knew that whoever this mysterious woman was, she needed the Spring and Autumn tree. Nobody was willing to offend someone from within the ring of private booths.

Chu Yuyan let out a light sigh. She was spending three-hundred fifty thousand, which was far more than its actual value. But to her, it was worth it.

However, at this exact moment, a voice suddenly broke the silence down below.

“Three-hundred sixty thousand.”

When the voice rang out, everyone in the auction square gaped in shock, looking around to try to see who had just spoken. Because the Cultivators in his immediate vicinity were looking at him in amazement, it didn't take long before everyone in the square was looking at him.

He sat there, his head lowered, his face covered, his eyes calm.

“Four-hundred thousand!” said Chu Yuyan, frowning. She never imagined that someone else would put forth another bid, but she had no choice other than to raise the price.

“Four-hundred ten thousand,” said Meng Hao coolly. His voice was deeper than normal, but he still spoke calmly.

# Chapter 110: Chu Yuyan's Killing Intent

"I can't believe he's going to try to outbid someone from the second level! Who is this guy? He's wearing a big hat and you can't see his face."

"That guy's got real nerve to jack up the price so high for a Spring and Autumn tree."

"Who is the Cultivator in that top level booth...? This is interesting." Discussions sprang up in the auction square. Only Sir Qiao, up on the stage, appeared the same as ever. He glanced at Meng Hao, then looked up toward the top level booth.

Behind him, a look of interest appeared on Qiao Ling's face. She looked at Meng Hao closely, but because of his wide hat, and the cloth covering his face, she didn't recognize him.

"Five-hundred thousand!" said Chu Yuyan, her brow furrowed. This was an incredible bid even for her. She stepped forward, lifting up the booth's curtain. Suddenly, she became the center of attention of everyone down in the auction square.

They all recognized her.

"That's...."

"Chu Yuyan! It's Chu Yuyan from the Violet Fate Sect!"

"So, it's her..." The entire square broke out into conversations. In the State of Eastern Emergence, Chu Yuyan was highly respected. She was a Cultivator of the Violet Fate Sect, was Grandmaster Pill Demon's personal disciple, and her father was the Sect leader. This, coupled with her unsurpassed beauty, instantly caused everyone to stare at her.

"Well, so much for the suspense. If Chu Yuyan hadn't shown her face, very well. But now that she has, no one would be willing to try to outbid her for something as ordinary as a Spring and Autumn tree."

"It seems Chu Yuyan has her heart set on that Spring and Autumn tree. She even revealed her identity! Don't tell me those rumors from a few years back were true?"

“I think they were. Otherwise, she wouldn’t need a Spring and Autumn tree.”

The Cultivators’ conversations buzzed, and even Chu Yuyan assumed that the bidding for the Spring and Autumn tree was over. Then, Meng Hao’s cold voice rang out.

“Six-hundred thousand!” Meng Hao no longer increased the bid in ten-thousands. He immediately surpassed Chu Yuyan’s bid by one-hundred thousand. This caused quite the uproar; even Sir Qiao stared down at Meng Hao.

Chu Yuyan frowned at Meng Hao, but could only see the top of his hat.

“Six-hundred fifty-thousand!

“Seven-hundred thousand,” said Meng Hao calmly. He was determined to acquire the Spring and Autumn tree, and would not give up.

“Fellow Daoist, you must certainly know who I am,” said Chu Yuyan, her voice light as she stared at Meng Hao. “This item isn’t worth so many Spirit Stones. I need it to help suppress poison for someone I’m sure you know. Please back down; if you do, I’ll consider myself to be in your debt.”

This caused further discussions on the auction floor.

“So, the rumors are true. She’s buying it for Wang Tengfei of the Wang Clan!”

“According to the people from the Golden Frost Sect, Wang Tengfei, one of the Chosen from the Wang Clan, used to be a member of a Sect in some backwater nation. He was searching after some amazing Legacy. But he was trounced during a tussle over a spot in the Inner Sect, and a local Cultivator smashed his finger!”

“That’s most likely true. That guy Li Fugui who the Golden Frost Sect cares so much about has a beef with Wang Tengfei. He talks about it to everyone. And as for Wang Tengfei, he treats even himself poorly. He formed a new finger for himself, but it was poisonous. A lot of people know about it. Obviously, Chu Yuyan wants the Spring and Autumn tree to help Wang Tengfei suppress the poison of his finger!”

When Meng Hao heard this, a barely perceptible flicker appeared in his eyes. Now he knew why Chu Yuyan was so anxious to get the Spring and Autumn tree. And from what the other Cultivators were saying, it sounded like Fatty Li Fugui was doing quite well for himself in the Golden Frost Sect.

“Fellow Daoist Chu, I also very much need this item,” said Meng Hao coolly.

Chu Yuyan’s eyes flashed coldly. She gritted her teeth and stared at Meng Hao. “Seven-hundred fifty-thousand!” she said.

“Nine hundred thousand.” Meng Hao still had quite a bit of Spirit Stones in his bag of holding. He had made up his mind to win the Spring and Autumn tree, so immediately called out an exorbitant price.

Hearing such a high number, the surrounding Cultivators gasped and looked greedily at Meng Hao. But then they realized that anyone who dared to snatch an item out from in front of Chu Yuyan from the Violet Fate Sect, must surely have powerful backing.

“You!” Chu Yuyan gnashed her teeth so hard they seemed on the verge of shattering. She was a Chosen of the Violet Fate Sect. However, the spirit stones she carried belonged not to herself, but the Sect. It would be hard to explain why she had spent so much to help Wang Tengfei, regardless of her position within the Sect. Nine-hundred thousand was a number that left her feeling somewhat powerless. She said nothing, simply staring down at Meng Hao, her eyes shining with murder.

A long moment passed, and she didn’t make a higher bid. The Spring and Autumn tree went to Meng Hao. Someone from the Hundred Treasures Pavilion approached him to accept his money and give him the item. He accepted it, then left the auction square as quickly as possible.

He didn’t care what other items were being auctioned off. He had no intention of staying behind. In Cultivator auctions, anyone can leave at any time.

He hurried out, moving as fast as possible through several alleys. He tossed off his hat and cloth mask, and then changed his robe. He now

looked completely different than he had in the auction square.

Moving at top speed, he headed straight out of the city gate. One hundred meters out, he shot into the sky, turning into a beam of light that shot off into the distance. After he had been flying for the time it takes an incense stick to burn, a whistling scream could be heard behind him. It was a spotless white crane, chasing after him at a speed that exceeded his own.

Meng Hao frowned and looked back.

Standing atop the crane was a woman in white clothes. It was none other than Chu Yuyan, her face expressionless, but her eyes ice cold. She stared icily at Meng Hao's retreating form. The crane cried out, turning into a prismatic beam of light as it approached. A white glow emerged from its mouth, which transformed into a gigantic net which shot forward to envelop Meng Hao.

Chu Yuyan held a jade slip in her hand. There were black spots on the surface of the jade slip, which emanated an archaic Qi. She used it to summon a phantasmic white-haired old man, who came into being above the jade slip. The phantom lifted his hand and waved his finger toward Meng Hao. A phantasmic finger shot out to follow Meng Hao, which was the special function of this particular jade.

"Hand over the Spring and Autumn tree, and I won't cause you any trouble. Otherwise, I will use this searching jade to track you down. The ancient jade is locked onto you. Even if you flee to the ends of the earth, I'll be able to find you." Chu Yuyan slapped her bag of holding again, and a Violet Qi emerged, forming into a violet-colored lotus-seed pod, the size of a fist. She tossed it forward, whereupon it shook, shooting out a dozen lotus seeds. As they flew forward, the violet lotus seeds transformed into armor-clad phantom women, who shot toward Meng Hao brandishing battle spears.

As they approached, pressure from Chu Yuyan's Foundation Establishment Cultivation base bore down on Meng Hao. In addition, the armor-clad women who sped toward Meng Hao seemed to be emitting the



power of the early Foundation Establishment stage. Above, the clouds spiralled violently.

Meng Hao's eyes flashed. In the past six or seven years, he had gained a lot of experience using battle magic. Not waiting for the massive white net to descend, he opened his mouth and spit. Amidst a burst of lightning, the Lightning Flag emerged, transforming into a mist that shot out from Meng Hao, arcs of electricity dancing back and forth within it. It shot, not toward the descending net, but instead the approaching phantoms, wrapping them up.

An explosion sounded out in all directions. The phantom women shattered into pieces. Chu Yuyan frowned, lifting her delicate hands up in an incantation gesture. Just as she was about to cast some type of magic, Meng Hao's hand flashed. He used the mist emanated by the Lightning Flag to block his hand from Chu Yuyan's field of view. Then he smacked his bag of holding to produce the copper mirror, which he shined toward Chu Yuyan's crane.

Instantly, the crane's eye went wide with disbelief. A booming sound rang out as the crane's wing exploded into a mist of blood and flesh. Next, its rear end quivered and then exploded!

Blood and gore rained down, and a blood-curdling shriek came out of the once elegant crane's beak. Having lost its ability to fly, it tumbled down to the ground, pain wracking its body. Chu Yuyan gaped in astonishment. Seeing the crane's wing and butt explode bloodily had left her momentarily terrified.

As the crane screamed and fell to the ground, the huge white net began to break apart. Meng Hao shot backward in retreat, taking in a deep breath and causing the Lightning Mist to return into his bag of holding. Then, he drew a great, black bow out. He pulled back on the bow and shot nine arrows toward an astonished Chu Yuyan. Backed by the power of his Cultivation base, the arrows screamed as they flew through the air.

Boom after boom filled the air. Meng Hao frowned, continuing to shoot backwards at top speed. A violet-colored shield now circulated around

Chu Yuyan. When the arrows slammed into it, they disintegrated. However, the shield was also forced backward, and then was broken into pieces. Chu Yuyan's clothing was ripped open because of the arrows, revealing some of her skin. She was beautiful enough to begin with; seeing her like this would cause most men to palpitate with eagerness. A sharp glow emitted from her eyes as she stared at the black bow in Meng

"That bow was bestowed by the Sect upon Junior Brother Ding Yan. Why do you have it? After Ding Yan went to the State of Zhao, his life slip shattered. The State of Zhao...." An astute gleam filled her eyes. As she spoke, her eyes widened. She'd thought Meng Hao looked familiar, but now she was able to connect the dots. She finally recognized him; this was the Meng Hao that Wang Tengfei was always muttering about. "You're... you're Meng Hao! Didn't the State of Zhao disappear? You...."

"Clever girl," said Meng Hao, then took to flight.

Now that she knew who he was, her killing intent grew thicker. She sped in pursuit, her heart filled with shock as she thought of how only a few years ago, Meng Hao had been at the fifth or sixth level of Qi Condensation. Now, he was at the Foundation Establishment stage; based on the vibrations of his Cultivation base, it was clearly not Fractured. She was eighty to ninety percent sure that it must be Cracked!

The events of a few years ago in the State of Zhao had caused substantial waves of shock to ripple through the Southern Domain. Chu Yuyan was amazed that Meng Hao would appear here. Obviously, he must have escaped from the State of Zhao before it disappeared.

Meanwhile, at a location far from the central region of the Southern Domain, an enormous Roc appeared. It emanated a powerful Death Qi as it flew in from the Milky Way Sea. It moved at incredible speed, whipping up fierce winds as it passed. Lightning filled the sky around it. Anyone who didn't immediately get out of its way would be whipped up into the whirlwind it created and tossed to who knew where.

As it passed, mountains split and crumbled underneath the Roc's screaming cry. From a distance, many Cultivators saw the Rock and its

Death Qi, and their hearts quivered as they thought of the treasures that must exist on its body. Some tried to chase it, but they were too slow. In the space of time it takes for an incense stick to burn, they were left behind.

This solitary Roc was on the verge of death. And yet, just as ever, it flew through the sky, a Sovereign of the Heavens!

# Chapter 111: The Roc and the Flying Rain-Dragon

Chu Yuyan also had a Flawless Foundation. This was because she was the daughter of the Sect leader of the Violet Fate Sect, and also because of Grandmaster Pill Master. Furthermore, her latent talent could be considered the third best in the entire Violet Fate Sect.

It was for this reason that her father sent a special request to the Upright Clan in the Eastern Lands for a Flawless Foundation Pill, which was very rare in the Southern Domain. It was in this fashion that Chu Yuyan established her Flawless Foundation.

Of course, the Violet Fate Sect had paid quite a price for this.

As she raced in pursuit of Meng Hao, her eyes flashed. According to her judgement, there was no way Meng Hao could have a Flawless Foundation. In the current generation of Chosen in the entire Southern Domain, there were only eight Cultivators with a Flawless Foundation, one in each of the five Clans and three Sects.

Even Wang Tengfei didn't have a Flawless Foundation, only a Cracked one. The Wang Clan was large, and Wang Tengfei was one of many Chosen. Neither was he one of the most illustrious members of the clan. Most of the attention was actually focused on his older brother.

"Meng Hao..." Her eyes flickered, and her mouth twisted into a cold smile. To see such a cold expression on her beautiful face was actually somewhat arousing. "A trifling Cracked Foundation! The only things you have are a few strange magical items!" She increased her speed, and the two of them transformed into beams of shining light as they screamed through the air above the State of Eastern Enlightenment.

After reaching Foundation Establishment, flight is possible. But in terms of speed, Chu Yuyan, who was in the middle Foundation Establishment stage, was quite a bit faster than Meng Hao. In a relatively short time, she caught up to him.

Boom!

A massive explosion bellowed out. Chu Yuyan had flickered an incantation and sent a violet mist shooting toward Meng Hao. It had been blocked by the mist of the Lightning Flag, which subsequently fell apart.

As the explosion rang out, Meng Hao continued to flee, looking back coldly at Chu Yuyan.

“You might be fast, but you can’t catch me. I paid the highest price at the auction. The Spring and Autumn tree is mine, it’s just the will of the Heavens.”

“I will capture you today, and not for the Spring and Autumn tree,” she said calmly, “but for Wang Tengfei’s finger! Furthermore, you shall explain clearly how you obtained Ding Yan’s black bow!” She was beautiful in both complexion and figure as she flew through the air, her clothes rippling in the wind. Somehow she had managed to change her dress. The skin which had previously been exposed was now covered.

Meng Hao didn’t reply, but a sneer appeared in his eyes. From their encounter moments ago, he had determined that Chu Yuyan was in the middle of the Foundation Establishment stage, and that he couldn’t defeat her. But, she wanted to capture him, and that wouldn’t be easy. He continued on forward.

The two of them continued on for nearly two hours. She tried several times to get ahold of him, but the lightning mist protected him. Each time, a bang would ring out, and he would continue on. Chu Yuyan was starting to feel a bit helpless.

Evening was falling, and as it did, Chu Yuyan’s frown deepened. She didn’t pay attention at all to Meng Hao’s Cultivation base, but rather the powerful lightning mist that protected him. It was extremely difficult to break through. She ground her teeth and then slapped her bag of holding. An ancient oil lamp appeared. This was one of her most valuable treasures; she had never even used it in battle before. But in order to capture Meng Hao, she couldn’t afford to hold it in reserve.

The lamp was not lit when it appeared, but it already filled the air with

an archaic noise. Chu Yuyan took a deep breath and then blew on the wick of the lamp. As she did, her face grew pale. But then a tongue of flame appeared.

Once the lamp was lit, the entire area within a one hundred meter diameter was filled with a bright sheet composed of countless flames.

It had no shape, and could not be touched, but could be seen. When it did, Meng Hao's eyes narrowed.

"Spotlight Threads, unite!" Her clear voice rang out, and the bright lights filling the area separated into multiple threads, which then blocked off Meng Hao's path of escape to the left, right and ahead. They slowly began to surround him.

Even as Meng Hao realized the dangerous situation he was in, the lightning mist began to shrink. It appeared that the enveloping threads of light were causing it to dissipate.

Meng Hao's eyes glittered as he stopped moving forward. Instead, he reversed his direction, the lightning mist swirling around his body as he shot toward Chu Yuyan.

When she saw him charging her, her eyes narrowed. She pushed her palms together in front of her, whereupon a huge field of Violet Qi poured out of the top of her head and swirled about her. Then, she struck out with both hands, pointing toward Meng Hao. The Violet Qi coalesced into the form of a long, violet dragon. Roaring, it charged Meng Hao.

Within the lightning mist, Meng Hao saw the violet dragon approaching. His right hand flashed an incantation gesture and then waved forward. The lightning mist roiled and then made a beeline for the approaching dragon. At the same time, his left hand slapped his bag of holding. One hundred flying swords emerged. Meng Hao took control of them with this Spiritual Sense, causing them to form a whirlwind of swords. When it, along with the lightning mist, collided with the violet dragon, a huge explosion ripped out. But the sword whirlwind continued on toward Chu Yuyan.

Her oil lamp had prevented Meng Hao from fleeing. She knew that soon,

the threads of light would close in on Meng Hao, and he would be unable to escape even if he had wings.

Her face was calm as she slapped her bag of holding again. A red, white and black fan appeared in her hand, which she waved ahead of her three times.

The first time she waved it, a red glow appeared, which turned into a large red horn.

The second time she waved it, a white glow appeared, which transformed into a rhinoceros, to which the horn attached.

The third time she waved, a black glow appeared which coalesced into a black coat of armor which covered the rhino. Waving its head wildly, the rhino charged toward Meng Hao's sword whirlwind.

Meng Hao let out a shout, and the sword whirlwind began to collapse. Suddenly, all of the swords exploded. Fragments flew about in all directions, and then fused together and shot toward the black-armored rhino.

At the same time, the lightning mist suddenly expanded out with a roar, filling the area within one hundred meters.

Meng Hao's body flashed as he approached Chu Yuyan, his body covered with lightning mist. A Flame Python flew out from his right hand, causing her to let out a light snort. A string of bells appeared in her hand, which let out light tinkling sounds. The Flame Python began to wail mournfully.

Disdain covering her face, Chu Yuyan lifted her hand up. The bells rang as she waved her hand toward Meng Hao.

Violet Qi poured out from the fingers of her hand, speeding straight toward Meng Hao.

At this point, the shining threads of light had reached a position just a few meters away from Meng Hao. The multiple interlocking layers of light seemed to be completely under the control of Chu Yuyan's will.

An almost imperceptible gleam appeared in Meng Hao's eyes as the

Violet Qi neared him. A variety of expressions flickered across his face, and he retreated, seeming to almost fumble as he slapped his bag of holding. A wooden sword appeared, and even as it slammed into the Violet Qi, a second wood sword shot out, followed by a small, black net. To Chu Yuyan it appeared as if she had caused Meng Hao to rush in his attack. Otherwise, why would he suddenly use so many treasures? It was really beyond the proper limits of reason.

“You’re a backwater Cultivator from a backwater nation,” said Chu Yuyan coolly, raising her hand. “Even if you’re at Foundation Establishment, you only have a Cracked Foundation. You don’t even deserve to show your face!” The power of her middle Foundation Establishment Cultivation base flared. The four Dao pillars within her body surged, and a gale force wind blew out from her right hand. Meng Hao’s wooden swords twisted in the air, and then black net rocked back and forth.

But at this moment, Meng Hao’s eyes gleamed brightly. The black net suddenly grew larger. Even as the threads of light contracted around him like iron bands, the net shot directly in Chu Yuyan’s direction. Its speed and growth were too sudden, giving her no time to react. In the blink of an eye, she was enveloped by the net, which shrank around her and pinned her tight within its confines.

As it contracted around her, her white dress was once again shredded, revealing more of her graceful and elegant curves. It was enough to send any man panting. She was both angry and nervous. Hate filled her eyes as she glared murderously at Meng Hao, killing intent radiating out from her eyes.

“I don’t need to show my face anywhere,” he said coolly, looking back at Chu Yuyan. “Being able to catch you while I’m tied up is good enough for me.” The threads of light had securely tightened around him.

The two of them were both momentarily incapacitated. Neither of them dared to use any spiritual energy against the other. They were in a deadlock.



Chu Yuyan's murderous intentions grew stronger, causing even Meng Hao to show a bit of killing intent.

Everything grew quiet. Chu Yuyan didn't move, and neither did Meng Hao. They both circulated their Cultivation bases, attempting to free themselves from their constraints. Whoever got free first would be the victor.

Time slowly passed. Soon, it was dusk. Meng Hao rotated his Cultivation base rapidly, and as he did, he felt the threads of light growing looser. Chu Yuyan was doing the same thing. Under the power of her Cultivation base, the black net was beginning to show weaknesses.

As this was happening, far in the distance, the sound of wind could be heard. At first it wasn't very strong. It caused Chu Yuyan's hair to drift about, and Meng Hao's eyes to grow dry. It didn't take long for the wind to grow stronger, though. Soon it was whipping about wildly.

A black shadow appeared off in the distance. Despite being very far away, it was obviously a colossal flying bird. It was... the roc from the Milky Way Sea, flying toward the Rebirth Cave!

Like a sovereign of the heavens, every flying thing in the sky must bow to this roc. As its sovereignly will of the heavens exuded out, the Demonic Core within Meng Hao's Dao Pillar began to shake. It wished to battle with this sovereign of the heavens.

Because the Flying Rain-Dragon is also a sovereign of the heavens!

The wind grew even more violent. Meng Hao's body began to be pulled backward. Chu Yuyan's expression changed as she too began to be pulled up. Meng Hao's lightning mist, Chu Yuyan's oil lamp flame, and even the wooden swords, were all pulled into motion by the wind. It seemed as if they would all be blown away.

# Chapter 112: Things Change

“That’s... that’s a roc!” cried Chu Yuyan. “In the Nanshan Continent, rocs can only emerge from the Milky Way Sea. Meng Hao, let me loose. Based on the death Qi emanating from it, it’s obviously about to die, and is heading toward the Rebirth Cave. The wind it kicks up is going to sweep everything away!”

“You release me first,” he said, coldly. He could feel the shaking of the Demonic Core within his Dao Pillar.

“You!” said Chu Yuyan, gnashing her teeth. She was about to say something else when suddenly the wind’s ferocity increased dramatically. In the blink of an eye, a roaring sound filled the earth. Countless mountain peaks were shattered and crumbled by the wind, sending fragments of rock flying about. All of a sudden, the roc changed directions. Having felt the power of the Demonic Core within Meng Hao, a mysterious light began to shine from its eyes. It screamed through the air in the direction of Chu Yuyan and Meng Hao.

The sky grew dark as the gale-force wind blew over the land, threatening to sweep everything up. It was as if everything in this part of the world belonged to the roc, and it alone!

A twisting whirlwind accompanied the roc’s arrival. Mountains fell apart and trees were ripped up by the roots in a shocking display of power!

The wind swept up Meng Hao and Chu Yuyan. The oil lamp hovering next to Chu Yuyan shook violently, and was extinguished. The instant it did, the threads of light that bound him disappeared.

The power of the Demonic Core erupted once again within him, just as it had the day the Legacy had first appeared. Within Meng Hao’s head appeared images from ancient times.

Within these images, a Flying Rain-Dragon and a roc were locked in combat!

Boom!

Meng Hao felt as if a huge wave had just crashed onto his mind. He spun up toward the whirlwind, and he felt as if he were being crushed. Blood sprayed from his mouth. Like a kite whose string was cut, his body flopped over and over in the air as he was sucked up.

In the last moments before he lost consciousness, he sent out his last bit of spiritual energy to drag the wooden swords and lightning flag back. Then he passed out.

Chu Yuyan was in an even worse situation. As she began to be sucked upward, she coughed up a mouthful of blood. Her body was still wrapped up by the black net. She tumbled upward along with her oil lamp. Her face was pale, and filled with despair. Another gust of wind from the roc buffeted her, and she coughed up even more blood, then slipped into unconsciousness.

Meng Hao and Chu Yuyan were both Foundation Establishment Cultivators. Despite that, when the screaming wind generated by the roc lifted them up, they were completely powerless to resist it. Thankfully, they were not like the mountains, which were connected firmly to the land. Their resistance to the wind left them shattered.

The two of them were like plucked willow catkins, powerless to offer any resistance. They were hurt by the buffeting wind, and knocked unconscious, but were not ripped to pieces. The wind held them tight and carried them off into the distance.

The wind continued to sweep across the State of Eastern Emergence for several days after the roc's passage, before finally dying down.

Meng Hao opened his eyes.

His entire body hurt, causing his eyes to flicker as they opened. An all encompassing pain filled him, causing him to tremble so badly he felt as if he would fall into pieces.

Calm slowly filled his eyes. The pain was alarming, but it actually didn't compare to the times when the poison within him flared up. Thanks to that, he was used to this kind of pain.

He slowly struggled into a sitting position, panting. He looked down at his body; his clothing was in shreds; bruises and abrasions covered his skin. There were countless wounds, some of which were deeper than other; there some areas where the skin had been removed entirely. If he bumped up against the nearby rocks, it sent piercing pain deep into his bones.

He gasped for breath as he examined himself. As he did, his eyes grew wide. His body felt weak. In fact, it felt almost the same as it had six or seven years ago on Mount Daqing.

“My Cultivation base....” Meng Hao immediately attempted to circulate his Cultivation base. He let out a sigh of relief when he found that it was still there. But then he frowned. He was completely incapable of accessing it, as if it were being blocked by some powerful force.

It was at this moment, as he glanced over his destroyed clothing, that he realized that none of his bags of holding were on his person. It seemed they had all been blown away by the raging wind.

His face fell. He lifted up his hand and reached deep into his robe. When he pulled it out, there was the bag of the Cosmos. This bag was different than a regular bag of holding, so Meng Hao always kept it tucked inside his robe. Therefore, the wind hadn’t been able to touch it.

It’s a good thing I keep most of my things inside the bag of the Cosmos,” muttered Meng Hao, “including my wooden swords and the Lightning Flag. Otherwise this would have been a horrible loss.” He tried to open it up, but no matter how he tried, was unable. Sighing, he looked around.

Within the darkness, black mists wafted to and fro. Strange rocks covered the ground, as well as numerous bones of birds and beasts. Who knew how long they had rotted here before turning into their currently deathly white color? Meng Hao was beginning to grow even more surprised.

Things were bad enough as it was, but then Meng Hao noticed that some of the bones were human....

He looked up toward the sky, but all he could see was endless swirling

mists.

“What is this place...?” A grim, gloomy look appeared on his face as he sat there. A sense of imminent danger welled up within him.

“I wonder if the change to my Cultivation base was caused by the great wind... or by of this place.” A long time passed before he gathered enough energy to grit his teeth and struggle to his feet. Supporting himself on a nearby rock, he slowly began to walk forward. Time passed enough for an incense stick to burn, whereupon Meng Hao came to a halt. In front of him was a wall of black rock. The wall disappeared up into the mists, making it impossible to see its top.

Meng Hao looked behind him. At this point, he realized that he was most likely at the bottom of some deep abyss.

“So the wind kicked up by the roc carried me to the bottom of this precipice. Who knows what part of the State of Eastern Emergence I’m in? I need to restore my Cultivation base, then I’ll be able to get out of here.” He leaned up against the cliff wall and then sank to his feet to build up some more energy.

Time passed. Being unable to see the sky, it was difficult for him to know how much. Slowly, the strength in his body built up. He once again tried to open the bag of the Cosmos, but was unsuccessful. Finally, he had no choice but to give up. He stood, looking around until he caught sight of a tree branch about as wide as his arm. Using it to support himself, he began to walk again.

“If this is a cliff, then it will have an end,” he said, looking around. Everything around him was quiet, without the slightest bit of noise. The only thing he could hear was his own heartbeat. He took in a deep breath, deciding to explore the entire area until he found a way out.

He walked slowly, caution on his face. The place had a ghastly feel, and he wasn’t sure what danger might be lurking about. But he had to search around. If there was any danger, then so be it.

About four hours passed, and Meng Hao felt himself slowly recovering. He had reached Foundation Establishment after completing the Great

Circle of Qi Condensation, so his body was naturally much tougher than before. But his heart began to sink when after all this time, he still hadn't found any way out. In fact, the strange rocks which littered the ground seemed to be growing more dense.

After about another hour, he suddenly stopped walking. His eyes gleamed with a strange light as he looked up ahead, and a cold smile twisting the corner of his mouth.

Up ahead of him, a person was lying on one of the strange rocks. A dilapidated and torn white gown revealed great swaths of smooth skin. Long hair lay in disarray around... Chu Yuyan.

She lay there unconscious. Next to her was a small black net.

Meng Hao's eyes glittered as he slowly approached her. He placed his finger beneath her nose, then felt at a patch of exposed flesh on her abdomen. The skin was soft and pleasant-feeling. He pushed down hard onto her abdomen. Then, he stepped to the side, grabbing the black net and tucking it away.

"She's not dead. I could feel that her Cultivation base is still there, just suppressed. She has no way to access her spiritual energy." His eyes narrowed, and he looked at Chu Yuyan for a long moment. He laughed. "I know you're awake. There's no need to pretend to be unconscious."

Chu Yuyan still didn't move. Meng Hao let out a cold snort. Using the long branch in his hand, he poked at her.

Her eyes snapped open and she glared coldly at him.

Meng Hao gave her an empty smile. He suddenly realized that it was very boring in this abyss. His gaze passed over Chu Yuyan's body, her delicate curves, the skin revealed by her torn clothing, and the edges of her red 'dudou' undergarment. All of this made her extremely beautiful.

Her face suddenly flushed, and anger filled her eyes as she stared murderously at him. She struggled to cover herself up, then gasped in pain. There was a strangeness to her gasp that was clearly audible in the silence of the abyss.

Hearing it, Meng Hao laughed.

“What are you laughing at, you despicable, dirty, THING!”

Meng Hao lifted his hand up and slapped her directly across the face, his eyes cold. “Shut up.”

“You!!” Her expression was livid as a palm print appeared on her beautiful face. Meng Hao had slapped her viciously, causing her body to tremble. In her entire life, no one had ever dared to strike her. Even Wang Tengfei treated her like an honored guest.

Another slap rang out as Meng Hao smacked her again in exactly the same spot.

“I told you to shut up,” he said calmly. “Wang Tengfei might treat you like a precious gem. But to me, you’re nothing.”

She gritted her teeth and stared him dead in the eye. With her Cultivation base being suppressed, she was just like a mortal. Chu Yuyan suddenly felt a sense of danger well up inside her. Once, she had been a high and mighty Chosen, but now she had fallen far, far down. Now, she was simply a weak woman, at the mercy of Meng Hao.

# Chapter 113: An Altar in a Lake

“We’ve rested enough,” said Meng Hao coolly. “Get up. You walk in front.”

Chu Yuyan said nothing. Grinding her teeth, she struggled to her feet. As she did, her clothes shifted, revealing more of her body. Her face just now had been pale white, but was now crimson. As of now, the hatred in her heart toward Meng Hao was even greater than that felt by Wang Tengfei.

But she had lost access to her Cultivation base, and was now just a tender woman. She couldn’t compare at all to Meng Hao. Although he had started out as a scholar, the strength and toughness of his body were far beyond that of an ordinary Cultivator.

He might not be as strong as those Cultivators who focus on body training, but in terms of recovery and strength, he was far from ordinary. Otherwise, he would not have recovered consciousness so much more quickly than Chu Yuyan.

She could only endure and comply with his demand that she take the lead, the fury in her heart growing deeper and deeper. Meng Hao naturally was aware of this. He walked behind her, looking at her graceful figure. The rips in her garment revealed large portions of the skin on her back.

The reason he had Chu Yuyan walk in front, however, was because he still felt at danger in this place. Chu Yuyan would act as a wind vane; she would be able to provide advance notice of any potential threat.

They moved forward in single file. If he wanted to, Meng Hao would change their course by pointing and giving new instructions. Chu Yuyan had no choice other than to clench her jaw and comply. Hatred for Meng Hao had seeped into her bones. Yet she could only obey him. A very long time passed by, and it seemed as if soon they would have explored everywhere they could. Everything was cliff face, with no exits.

Strange rocks littered the landscape, as did the skeletons of various birds and beasts. Was this place some sort of death trap?



Meng Hao grew more silent. Chu Yuyan's mood slowly fell, until despair showed in her eyes.

They followed the cliff face, eventually coming to the realization that they were walking in a large circle. Sometimes, they would rest up against the cliff face for a while before continuing. One day they reached an area that seemed to contain an unusually large amount of bones. Suddenly, they caught sight of a lake.

The shores of the lake were piled with countless bones, many of which were human. It was impossible to tell how many years they had been there. The aura of the place was gruesome, and also seemed to be filled with the stink of blood.

In fact this lake, was a lake of blood.

As Chu Yuyan approached the lake, the formerly calm surface began to ripple. As soon as the tiny waves began to spread out, Meng Hao stopped.

Chu Yuyan's face drained of blood, and her body began to quiver. An intense sense of danger filled her, as if something horrifying existed within the lake, and was looking at her.

"Walk back slowly," said Meng Hao softly. He stood a bit further away from the lake. "Don't panic. One step at a time. "

Biting her lip, Chu Yuyan slowly moved backwards a few meters. The lake began to roil, and a piercing shrieking sound could be heard coming from within it. Chu Yuyan moved backward as quickly as possible

Amidst the ringing shrieks which filled the air, a dark green altar suddenly rose up from within the lake. Waves swelled across the surface of the lake of blood. Figures appeared from within the blood. It was difficult to tell which were male and which were female, because they had no skin, only bloody flesh. They carried the dark stone altar on their shoulders as it rose out of the lake.

The altar was over fifty meters in diameter, and as it rose out of the surface of the lake, it emitted a sickly reddish-green glow. On top of the altar was a throne made of stone, seemingly the same dark green stone the

altar was formed from.

Sitting on the throne was a skeleton. Death Qi wafted around it, and its face was covered with a mask. The mask was white and featureless.

Meng Hao's pupils constricted and he stood motionless. Chu Yuyan stood there pale-faced, equally unwilling to move. Enough time passed to take about ten breaths, and then the stone altar slowly began to sink back down. Once again, the bloody surface of the lake grew still, and everything returned to quietness.

Meng Hao let out a long breath and walked backward slowly. Chu Yuyan did the same thing. When the two of them had retreated about a hundred meters, the sense of imminent danger in their hearts slowly faded.

"What was that..." said Chu Yuyan, the first words she had spoken voluntarily in days. Her voice was weak and hoarse.

Meng Hao didn't reply. Instead, he turned and walked off. Chu Yuyan hesitated a moment, then followed silently. They returned to the cliff face, to a place where earlier they had discovered a natural cave. Inside, Meng Hao sat down cross-legged. Chu Yuyan leaned back against the cave wall, her arms hugging her legs. She stared blankly outside.

She was a proud woman, but what had happened now, coupled with the suppression of her Cultivation base, the presence of the detestable Meng Hao, all of this, gradually filled her heart with pernicious despair. Her only hope was that the Violet Fate Sect would somehow be able to track her down here.

But this place was very strange, and apparently could suppress Cultivation bases. Most likely, it also suppressed the brand of the Violet Fate Sect in her body, which would make it impossible for them to know where she was.

Her clothes were in tatters, and couldn't even cover her sufficiently. More than half of her body was exposed, especially when she sat in this posture. Almost all of her legs were visible.

Time passed. Every time it seemed a day had come and gone, Meng Hao

placed a rock into a small pile next to him. There were already eight. According to his calculations, eight days had passed.

Their Cultivation bases were locked down, preventing any spiritual energy from dispersing. Luckily, they didn't need food. But this place had no spiritual energy, and if things kept going on like this, they would begin to grow more and more hungry. Considering they were stuck in a remote abyss, they really needed the energy of heaven and earth... except there wasn't any.

During the eight days, Meng Hao would spend about half the time circulating his Cultivation base, trying to break through whatever was suppressing it. At the very least, he was hoping to be able to open his bag of holding. And yet, he experienced no success.

The rest of the time he spent taking Chu Yuyan out to search for a way out. But, having searched the area so many times, they didn't find any exit. The only thing they found out was that there seemed to be a lot of vipers lurking about.

"I think this place is an inactive volcano," said Chu Yuyan, "not just a hole in the ground." She sat there in the small cave, looking out. She wasn't reconciled to cooperating with Meng Hao, but couldn't think of any way to get out of this place.

Meng Hao sat quietly at the mouth of the cave, looking out with a frown.

Chu Yuyan looked at him sitting there cross-legged, and then suddenly blurted, "I need a change of clothes!" The look in her eyes was solemn and earnest, more so than it had been this entire time.

Despite her haggard state, this look would cause desire to blossom in the heart of any man who gazed upon her beauty.

Meng Hao closed his eyes. "I don't have any," he said coolly.

"You have some in your bag of holding." Her clothes were ragged and soiled, revealing over half of her body. Even more of her undergarments were now visible. Her flesh appeared soft and supple. Half covered, half exposed, the sight of her was incredibly enticing.

Meng Hao's eyes snapped open, and he looked at Chu Yuyan coldly. His gaze swept over her, over her body, her curves, her beautiful features. Most men who saw something like this would immediately be consumed with a fiery heat.

Eight days before, it would have been impossible for Meng Hao to catch a glimpse of Chu Yuyan's body, even if he wanted to. And if he had, she would never have given up until he was dead.

But now... as Meng Hao looked at her, the only thing she did was unconsciously cover her chest. She had no way to prevent him from looking at her.

"You're right," he said slowly. "I do have some clothes in my bag of holding. But for some reason, I'm unable to open it because of the lack of spiritual energy here."

"There's a way," she said quietly. "There's a way to open your bag of holding and take some clothes out."

He looked at her coolly, his face as calm as ever, with no change in expression whatsoever.

Chu Yuyan had originally assumed that as soon as he heard her words, he would ask her for more details. But after waiting for a very long moment, she could see that he wasn't planning to speak. With a cold harrumph, she continued speaking.

"My Cultivation method is the Violet Fate Sect's 'Violet Qi from the East.' Actually, two people can practice this type of Cultivation together. Even though the spiritual energy in this area is suppressed, if I teach you the method, and we work together, we might have a chance at success. Then, your bag of holding can be opened."

He pondered for a while, then shook his head. "I don't believe you. Please explain further."

"Believe if you want," Chu Yuyan said coldly, frowning. "If you don't believe, then forget it." She sat down in a far corner of the cliff cave. When Meng Hao glanced back at her, she unconsciously tried to cover herself

up. She glared at him, covering her legs with her arms.

“I don’t have a lot of clothes,” he said calmly, “but there’s enough to allow you to cover yourself. If you don’t want them, then fine, just forget about it.” He closed his eyes.

An hour passed, during which time Chu Yuyan ground her beautiful teeth. She really just could not tolerate being exposed in this way. Before long, she wouldn’t be able to cover herself up at all.

Clenching her jaw, she said, “I lost my bag of holding in the wind, so I have no way to test it out. But the method I just mentioned should work. Violet Qi from the East is not an ordinary technique. It was passed down from the Eastern Lands. If two people practice the technique together, its power can open the vault of the heavens.

“If you have doubts, I can teach you the first mnemonic of the Violet Qi from the East. If you can master it, then I’ll tell you the second, and then the third. You can try to open the bag. All I need is some clothes.”

Meng Hao opened his eyes and looked at her. His face was expressionless, but in his heart was a cold sneer. He had experienced many hardships in the State of Zhao, and was no longer the ignorant youth he once was. He was much more calculating; how could he not tell that she was trying to set up a trap for him?

“Speak,” he said coldly.

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The name of the technique ‘Violet Qi from the East’ is also a Chinese idiom which means a sign of good luck.

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# Chapter 114: Many Thanks, Fellow Daoist Chu

Chu Yuyan slowly began to recite the secret method of the Violet Fate Sect. "Violet Qi from the East, Cultivate the Nine Violet Qis of heaven and earth, use the method that comes from the East, understand the rise of the sun and moon, transform the will of your heart, observe the brilliance, taste the moonlight...."

Seeing Meng Hao sitting there, apparently lost in thought, she spoke the words slowly. In her heart, she smiled coldly.

"He's surely guessed that I'm not simply after a set of clothing. But I've got him hooked. He wants to open his bag of holding as much as I do. He definitely won't take advantage of that brief moment just to take out some clothes for me. He'll take out some magical item or some medicinal pills. However, whatever he dares to take out, as long as he learns the Violet Qi to the West technique, then he'll be crippled!" A bit of hesitation flickered on her face as she slowly repeated the mnemonic.

This, of course, was not Violet Qi from the East, but rather a top secret mnemonic developed later by the Violet Fate Sect, called Violet Qi to the West. Even Wang Tengfei didn't know about it. It was taught only to special members of the Sect, and its purpose was to be able to provide spiritual power and life force to Chosen!

Every Chosen of the Violet Fate Sect would have an opportunity to select someone else to practice Violet Qi to the West. A Sect Elder would participate in order to prevent that person from resisting, as well as to keep them stable. After successfully performing the technique, that person would temporarily become a type of clone of the Chosen, whereupon the Chosen would be able to absorb their Cultivation base and life force with Violet Qi from the East.

It was because of the combination of the two arts that the Violet Fate Sect occupied its current position in the Southern Domain.

Chu Yuyan had not yet utilized the power of Violet Fate to the West on anyone. But there was no other option now, other than this technique.

Despite its power, there were potentially dangerous side-effects. Usually Sect Elders would be standing by, ready to provide assistance against any such mishaps.

“If you have no problems with the first mnemonic, then I’ll give you a bit of blood,” said Chu Yuyan calmly. “It’s impossible to see the sun, and without either the sun or moon in sight, it’s difficult to absorb Violet Qi. However, there is some in my blood, which will help you to use the technique.”

Meng Hao looked up at Chu Yuyan, his eyes flickering in contemplation. Inside, he was laughing coldly; before she had even uttered the mnemonic, he had guessed that she had ill intentions. The only thing he wasn’t sure of was the exact process she planned to use.

Having heard the first mnemonic, he had a faint clue. The main reason she was teaching him this Cultivation method was because even if it enabled him to open his bag of holding, it would also eventually harm him in some way.

He suddenly stood up, walked over and squatted down in front of her. He grabbed her hair and pulled her head close to him. She tried to struggle, but she just wasn’t as strong as he was. Even more of her body was exposed as she tried to resist.

“Meng Hao, what are you doing?!” she cried out, her expression changing. Suddenly, anxiety filled her heart, and her body began to shake. Her lips were only about one inch from his. She could smell his breath. His hand held the top of her head like an iron pincer; she was incapable of moving backward.

“You don’t need to give me any of your blood. I’ll take it myself.” He pulled her head to the side and then ruthlessly bit into her shoulder, chomping deep down into the flesh.

Her body trembled, and fierce hatred erupted in her eyes.

He was so close that she could feel his warmth. From a distance away, they almost looked like a couple embracing.

A moment later, Meng Hao loosened his grip and rose again. Not giving her another glance, he returned to his spot and sat down in meditation. Her blood dripped down the side of his face. His eyes closed, he began to Cultivate according to the mnemonic Chu Yuyan had just taught him.

It took a long moment for Chu Yuyan to settle her agitated breathing and recover her composure. She stared hatefully at Meng Hao.

“Just wait until you finish practicing this technique,” she thought. “I’ll suck up your Cultivation base and then chop you to pieces. I’ll use your own energy to activate the branding in my body. Then the Violet Fate Sect will be able to find me.” She ground her teeth until it seemed like they might shatter, vowing to pay back ten times as much insult to Meng Hao as she had endured today. This was especially true of the pain in her shoulder, and the bite marks. It was something she simply couldn’t accept.

Time passed by, several hours. Meng Hao’s eyes snapped open. Within his pupils, a bit of violet had appeared. When she saw this, Chu Yuyan felt a little bit better.

“The second mnemonic,” said Meng Hao casually.

Without hesitation, Chu Yuyan began to tell him the second mnemonic.”Violet Qi returns to the lake, dyeing the banks of the Dao Pillar; Nine rotations in three layers, a branding of a Violet Dragon...”

More time passed, even longer than last time. Chu Yuyan was starting to feel a bit hesitant.

“Back in the Sect, the person selected to practice Violet Qi to the West by Elder Brother Li only needed two hours to finish under the watch of an Elder. Why is Meng Hao going so slow?”

Her hesitation continued on for another four hours. Finally, Meng Hao opened his eyes. The violet glow was even stronger. When she saw this, Chu Yuyan let out a sigh of relief.

“He must just have ordinary latent talent, so it takes longer for him to



Cultivate.” Next, she told him the third mnemonic.

Meng Hao thought for a while in silence. Then he closed his eyes and began to meditate. This time took even longer. Two complete days passed before he finished. However, when his eyes opened, his pupils appeared to be completely violet, and his eyes glowed the same color.

In fact, his whole body seemed to be emitting a faint violet glow.

Chu Yuyan was originally a bit worried. But seeing the thick violet color within his eyes, her Cultivation base seemed to twitch vigorously. Her mind was now made up.

“Now there’s only one more step,” she thought, “and when that’s finished, he’s doomed!” Her eyes flickered slightly, and she said, “Now, we practice Cultivation together. When we combine our power, the bag of holding will open. You need to pay very close attention when that happens: you cannot slack off. The moment will be fleeting, and if you don’t get into the bag of holding then, there won’t be a second chance.” As she spoke, her loathing for him seemed to come out and settle onto his body. She lifted up her hands.

“Just hold on for a bit longer,” she thought, laughing coldly to herself. “And then everything will be over.”

Meng Hao’s face was expressionless. He looked coldly at Chu Yuyan, his violet pupils flickering. He took out the bag of the Cosmos and placed it next to him. He lifted his hands and placed his palms against hers. Suddenly, both of their Cultivation bases, which moments ago had been suppressed, began to boil.

The reaction grew stronger, and white Qi began to rise up from their bodies. Beads of sweat ran down their faces. As this happened, Meng Hao could clearly sense the violet-colored spiritual power in his body being called by something. It began to race toward his hands, and Chu Yuyan. The violet glow in his eyes began to fade.

At this moment, Meng Hao suddenly felt the suppressive force on his Cultivation base loosen a bit. A tiny sliver of spiritual power suddenly emerged. Without hesitation, Meng Hao sent it straight toward the bag of

the Cosmos. It glowed, and something emerged.

“Violet Qi from the East and to the West, bind!” cried Chu Yuyan, ignoring whatever had emerged from the bag of the Cosmos. Her eyes shined brightly.

It was at this moment, when the power of Meng Hao’s Cultivation base was rushing toward Chu Yuyan, that suddenly, she felt her own energy shake.... In the space of two breaths, it was like Meng Hao’s Cultivation base had disappeared completely. She wasn’t able to absorb anything more of it.

“He has a Foundation Establishment Cultivation base, it’s impossible that I could have only absorbed this little.... This....” Her expression changed as she looked up at Meng Hao. He looked back at her with a sneering smile. As of this moment, there wasn’t the slightest trace of violet in his eyes.

When she saw this, Chu Yuyan’s heart flip-flopped, and her face twisted with an expression of disbelief. She scrambled backward.

“You....”

“Many thanks, Fellow Daoist Chu,” he said coolly. He lifted his hand up, and the object that had emerged from the bag of the Cosmos flew into it.

It was a crystal stone. Not an ordinary crystal, but one of the three extra large Spirit Stones that remained in his bag!

Her face went pale as she pressed herself up against the rocky wall. Her heart pounded, unable to figure out why Violet Qi to the West had failed. She had definitely sensed him practicing Cultivation using the technique. And the violet color in his eyes could not have been faked. If it had, her own Cultivation base could not have begun to boil, nor could she have absorbed the tiny bit of his that she had.

Her body began to tremble. Her plan just now had been made up on the spot, and had its flaws. It was a gamble and she was sure she had hooked him. Once hooked, there was no way he should have been able to escape.

Yet the facts remained. Chu Yuyan’s heart trembled. As she looked at

Meng Hao, she was suddenly struck with how unpredictable he was. The feeling only grew stronger and stronger.

If that was all to the matter, then it wouldn't be a very big deal. But then she noticed the large spirit stone Meng Hao held in his hand. Her pupils constricted. She looked closer, and then began to pant, a look of disbelief covering her face.

“That's... an ultra-high grade Spirit Stone!”

# Chapter 115: Do You Want Out?

Meng Hao looked at Chu Yuyan for a moment. Then he shoved his hand toward the rocky wall, slashing a wound into his palm. Blood oozed out.

Chu Yuyan gasped. Next, Meng Hao shoved the large Spirit Stone into the wound. As she saw this, Chu Yuyan could almost feel how much it hurt. Meng Hao, however, didn't frown, even in the slightest.

Compared to the pain he felt during the poison flare-ups, this was nothing.

As soon as the Spirit Stone buried into the flesh of his palm, he felt a soaring explosion of spiritual energy enter his body. His eyes flashed as if with lightning.

His suppressed Dao Pillar suddenly shook, sucking up large amounts of spiritual energy, then sent it out, circulating throughout Meng Hao's body.

At the moment, his Second Core Sea was nowhere to be seen. Actually, the reason why Chu Yuyan's technique hadn't affected Meng Hao was because of his Second Core Sea. He had practiced the Violet Qi to the West technique, but only there in his Second Core Sea, where there was no Dao Pillar.

That was why it had taken such a long time. As for Chu Yuyan, she had absorbed only the power of Meng Hao's Second Core Sea. Relatively speaking, its power was like that of a firefly.

Now that his Cultivation base was circulating, Meng Hao smacked his bag of holding, summoning the Lightning Flag. It surrounded him with a mist of flickering electricity, which caused Chu Yuyan to back further away, her face pale. She stared dumbly at the mist, her mind a blank.

Protected by the mist, Meng Hao closed his eyes and continued to circulate his Cultivation base. The suppressive force in the area still existed, but Meng Hao was now gradually able to feel the motion of his Cultivation base.

The first level of Qi Condensation, the second, the third.... In the end, he

was able to exert power similar to that of the seventh level of Qi Condensation.

His eyes flickering, he took in a deep breath. The mist around him rolled inward, condensing into a small flag which he then placed into his mouth. He stood, grabbing up the bag of the Cosmos and retrieving a medicinal pill which he placed into the center of his palm. The wound slowly began to close up, congealing into a scab. As for the large spirit stone, it was still stuck inside the wound. If he took it out, his Cultivation base would once again be suppressed, and he would become like a mortal. At the moment, the most power he could muster was that of the seventh level of Qi Condensation.

Ignoring Chu Yuyan, Meng Ha smacked the bag of the Cosmos again, and a wooden sword flew out. He stepped onto it, and turned into a beam of light that shot upward into the air.

Within the fissure-like cave Chu Yuyan watched in shock as he disappeared, her heart filled with complicated, bitter emotions.

Everything was quiet. This silence contained an unspeakable loneliness which spread out everywhere, submerging Chu Yuyan in its depths. She laughed silently. She was in some undetermined location, at the bottom of a volcano that no one would even think to look for. She was as trapped as a person who had been buried alive in a tomb.

Meng Hao flew along on a wooden sword, his eyes shining. Soon, he left the mists behind. His speed increased, although not too much; he was still only able to wield the power of the seventh level, plus his body was still not in top condition. When the mists disappeared, Meng Hao found himself looking up at a starry sky.

When he caught sight of the stars, a bright look appeared on his face. But then, his eyes narrowed, and he came to a stop. He didn't emerge from the mouth of the volcano, but rather stood there looking up at it.

Had he not been careful just now, he might have overlooked the nearly transparent shield which covered the mouth of the volcano. It was some kind of seal. Meng Hao's eyes flashed as he retrieved a flying sword from

the bag of the Cosmos. With the flick of a sleeve, he sent it shooting toward the shield.

The instant it ran into the shield, the sword instantly turned into ash. Not a sound rang out.

Meng Hao watched this happen, a grim look on his face. He spit out the Lightning Flag. It transformed into a mist, which shot toward the shield. It could stand up against the power of Foundation Establishment, but when it ran into the shield, it couldn't push through. It collapsed, and began to show signs that it might be destroyed.

Sucking in a breath, Meng Hao quickly called back the Lightning Flag. In the space of only a few seconds, several cracks had appeared on its surface.

“Could it be that one can enter this place, but not leave it? Even the Lightning Flag can't break through. I wonder what would happen if I ran into the shield....” He frowned. The stars were visible outside the volcano, but this shield was blocking his way.

His eyes flashing, he flew back down on the wooden sword, soon landing on the misty floor of the volcano. He glanced around, then walked over to a section of rock. Moments later, he was flying back up, a brightly colored, one-meter-long viper in his hand.

The snake writhed, baring its fangs, which dripped with venom. However, Meng Hao held it behind its head so it couldn't bite him.

Back at the shield, he tossed the viper toward it. As soon as the viper hit the shield, its body was turned into a mist of blood and gore. An intact viper skeleton fell back down into the mists.

Meng Hao took a breath and looked at the shield, an apprehensive look in his face. Then, he gave a cold snort and smacked the bag of the Cosmos with his right hand. A vast quantity of flying swords appeared. He flicked his finger, and the swords shot toward the rock wall. Booms rang out as the swords dug a hole into the rock. But as the swords carved inward, a sound rang out like gold striking iron. Meng Hao looked into the deep hole, and then around at the rock walls.

The rock was dark green, and covered with flickering magical symbols; it was obviously under a restrictive spell.

Meng Hao let out a sigh. He tried a few more methods, but the result was always the same. Finally, he dug a small pit into the rock wall and sat down cross-legged. He looked up silently at the shield.

He sat like that for seven days, during which time he tried out various methods of breaking through the shield, but none of them worked. More time passed. Soon, it had been a month.

He was trapped by the shield. But down at the bottom of the volcano, Chu Yuyan didn't know that. She assumed that he was long gone.

On the first day, she sat outside, her arms wrapped languidly around her legs. She looked completely different from the beautiful woman from before. Now she seemed more like a withered flower.

When the third day arrived, she sat looking outside of the cave, frustration in her eyes, her face pale.

The third day, the fifth, the eighth.... Soon ten days and then thirteen days had passed. More and more frustration appeared in her eyes, and she was getting more and more hungry. Her body was also starting to grow cold. She felt like she was the only person alive in the entire world. She grew more and more forlorn. When Meng Hao was here, this feeling hadn't existed. Back then, she had just hated him, so much that she wished him to die a miserable death.

But thirteen days after he disappeared, the feeling of loneliness surrounded her like a giant mouth, ready to swallow her up.

She was now completely convinced that absolutely no Qi whatsoever could escape this place. Otherwise, the Violet Fate Sect would have already found her. But, soon it would have been a month, and no one had come for her. There was only one explanation for this.

The twenty-third day passed, then the twenty-sixth. The fear in her heart grew stronger amidst the silence that surrounded her. Her body trembled, and she felt incredibly alone. The depth of the silence made her feel as if

she were in some sort of illusion. She had the sensation that there were countless shadows walking to and fro around her; she shivered. At this moment, she was no longer a Chosen of the Violet Fate Sect. She was simply a frail young woman.

She clenched her jaw, not emitting the slightest sound, and refusing to shed tears.

During the month, Meng Hao sat underneath the shield within the protection of the lightning mist. He had used every idea he could think of to break through the shield, but there it was, the same as ever. It seemed even his voice could not pass through it, although that didn't matter because he hadn't seen even a single person in the sky above. Finally one night, black clouds filled the sky, and a torrential downpour began. The rain fell down through the shield onto Meng Hao's lightning mist.

Suddenly, a peal of thunder rang out, along with a bolt of lightning. When this happened, Meng Hao's eyes narrowed. He looked closely at the shield. After a moment, another bolt of lightning descended. Meng Hao's eyes began to shine.

He had noticed that every time lightning struck, the shield would ripple.

"So, lightning bolts can affect it... If lightning strikes it, maybe the shield can be opened." His heart began to thump. A huge group of metal flying swords appeared. He tossed them, hoping to be able to use them to attract some lightning bolts.

However, thunder and rain vanished, and the sky started to grow bright. He hadn't been able to attract any lightning bolts. However, hope now burned in his eyes.

"I can't attract lightning. Maybe that is because of the shield itself. If only there was a way to force the lightning down and blow open the shield... I need something to attract it. I need... hmm..." A light of inspiration shined in his head. He retrieved a piece of turtle shell from the bag of the Cosmos; this was the formula for the Perfect Foundation Pill.

He looked it over closely a few times, and then his eyes began to shine even brighter. They filled with determination.



“Establishing a Perfect Foundation is not permitted by the Heavens, and will provoke Tribulation Lightning....”

He put the turtle shell away and sat there in silent contemplation for a while. After a time, his body flashed toward the mists below. Soon he had reached the bottom of the volcano, and Chu Yuyan.

He looked at her, at her frustrated, pale face.

When she caught sight of him, she reflexively said, “You....”

“You’re Grand Master Pill Demon’s disciple,” said Meng Hao coldly. “Can you concoct pills?”

She nodded silently.

“Do you want out?!” His eyes flashed. As his words entered her ears, Chu Yuyan’s body began to tremble. Gradually, life began to seep back into her eyes.

# Chapter 116: Legacy of an Immortal!

“There’s a shield up above which makes it impossible to get out,” he said coolly. “I can’t break through it. But after a month of observation, I noticed that lightning seems to be able to distort it.” Chu Yuyan’s eyes were no longer filled with frustration. Instead, they shined with life, and a bit of charm.

Meng Hao lifted his hand into the air and made a snatching motion. A hissing viper flew toward him, which he grabbed deftly, pushing his finger into the weak spot of its head.

Holding the snake, he looked calmly at Chu Yuyan. Not bothering to explain anything, he walked forward and grabbed her around her supple waist. Her face turned crimson. Because of the raggedness of her clothing, Meng Hao’s hand landed directly onto her skin.

His body flashed as the flying sword beneath his feet shot upward, Chu Yuyan in tow. They went up, speeding out of the mists and soon reaching the shield. Meng Hao tossed the snake toward it. Chu Yuyan didn’t avert her eyes. She watched as the snake’s body turned into a haze of blood, and then its ghastly, white skeleton fell back down. Her expression flickered.

Meng Hao slapped his bag of holding, and ten flying swords appeared. They turned into multicolored beams of light as they shot forward, and subsequently turned into ash.

Having done all this, Meng Hao stared at her with cold eyes. Then, holding her close to him, he flew back down to the bottom of the volcano.

Being held by Meng Hao felt strange to her. As soon as they stepped foot onto the ground, she moved backward several paces. “What pill do you need?” she asked calmly.

“A Seven Thunders Pill,” he said, his expression the same as ever.

“Seven Thunders Pill?” she said with a frown. She’d never heard of such a medicinal pill before.

“I acquired it from an ancient location. It can provoke lightning from the

Heavens. If you can concoct it, then we can leave this place.” He said nothing more, allowing her to weigh the pros and cons for herself. To offer further explanation could raise further questions, and he didn’t want her to begin thinking in that way.

She was silent for a moment. Finally, she said, “To concoct pills, I would need a pill furnace.” Although she had never heard of a Seven Thunder Pill before, she had seen the shield with her own eyes.

Meng Hao slapped his bag of holding and produced a small pill furnace, about the size of a hand. This was something he’d acquired from Shangguan Xiu’s bag of holding. Shangguan Xiu had prepared it with the intention of concocting the pills himself.

“Seven Star Jade Furnace!” When Chu Yuyan laid eyes on the pill furnace, an expression of shock covered her face. She knew of this type of furnace; its quality was beyond the ordinary, and was extremely valuable. She looked back at Meng Hao. “In addition to a pill furnace, I would need the fire of heaven and earth.”

Meng Hao lifted his hand, and immediately the two wooden swords appeared. They slammed into the ground, spiralling downward into the earth. A moment passed, and then a rumbling sound could be heard. A hot air billowed out, followed by two wooden swords. From within the palm-sized hole created by the two wooden swords, flames leaped up. This was earthly fire.

They were inside a volcano, and it turned out the volcano wasn’t dead after all. Meng Hao had checked into this after his Cultivation base was restored, and had been about seventy to eighty percent sure of it.

“You have a pill furnace, and earthly fire,” said Meng Hao, his voice low. “What else do you need?”

Chu Yuyan looked at the glowing hole from which red flames spat forth. She felt the heat of the flames, and then looked at the pill furnace in Meng Hao’s hand. She couldn’t help but admit that this place was very suitable for concocting pills.

“I need to recover some of my Cultivation base,” she said, her eyes

flickering.

He gazed at her coldly, then lifted his hand. A low-grade Spirit Stone shot forth to hover in front of her. Her spirits seemed to rise as she snatched the Spirit Stone out of the air with her delicate hands. She clenched her jaw, then, following Meng Hao's example, split her hand open on an adjacent rock. Pain caused her face to pale, and her body trembled. Gritting her teeth, she shoved the Spirit Stone into the wound.

Then she sat down cross-legged to meditate. About an hour passed, and she opened her eyes. Her Cultivation base had recovered to about the second or third level of Qi Condensation.

"Give me the pill recipe," she said, standing up. "I'll also need a bag of holding." Her skin had recovered along with her Cultivation base. It was now lustrous and let off a gentle shine. She looked at Meng Hao.

He pulled out a jade slip, which he then placed between his eyebrows. Then he threw it toward Chu Yuyan. Next, he produced a variety of medicinal herbs which he handed over.

"The Seven Thunders Pill requires seven minor pills as its ingredients. This jade slip shows how to make the first of the seven. There are enough materials there to make two of them. That's all there is, so you only have two chances. If you fail, we have no hope of leaving." He tossed her the pill furnace along with an empty bag of holding. Without another word, he sat down cross-legged next to the cave, his eyes closed in meditation.

Chu Yuyan's brow furrowed. She quietly lifted up the pill furnace and placed the medicinal herbs into the bag of holding. Next, neared the earthly fire aperture and studied the flames for a bit. Then, she sat down cross-legged and began to analyze the jade slip.

Meng Hao's eyes opened a sliver and he looked at her for a moment before closing them again.

The Seven Thunders Pill he had asked her to make was, of course, the Perfect Foundation Pill. Only by concocting that pill would he have the hope of attracting Heavenly Tribulation lightning, and thus the chance to break open the shield.

As Chu Yuyan began the pill concoction process, doubts and suspicions would no doubt begin to well up within her. However, Meng Hao didn't care about this. The Perfect Foundation Pill required the seven minor pills. Missing even one wouldn't do. However, the minor pills were useless by themselves. They were only effective when combined together.

Meng Hao had two of the minor pills in his possession, but of course, Chu Yan wouldn't be able to reproduce them.

"There are a lot of weird things about this place," he thought to himself. "I've been able to restore some of my Cultivation base, I should go look around. Especially at that lake of blood."

A moment later, he stood up. Ignoring Chu Yuyan, who was currently studying the jade slip, he walked forward, disappearing into the mists.

Chu Yuyan watched him as he left, then looked back down at the Spirit Stone stuck into her bloody flesh.

"A low-grade Spirit Stone isn't enough to activate my branding.... At the very least, I would need a mid-grade Spirit Stone. Even with that, I wouldn't be completely confident of the results. It's already been more than a month, and no one from the Sect has arrived, which proves that the shield really can suppress everything. Very well then. I'll concoct the Seven Thunders Pill for him. That's the only chance of getting out of here." With a light sigh, she continued to examine the jade slip. She did so more earnestly than she had ever studied anything with her master back in the Sect.

Seven days flashed by. Meng Hao hadn't returned to the cave. Instead, he sat cross-legged in a cave he had hollowed out in the rock wall a bit over one hundred meters from the shore of the lake of blood.

In front of him were ten Spring and Autumn trees. His face was pale and his body trembled. In his hand was an additional Spring and Autumn tree. His eyes opened, and let out a long sigh.

The breath that he exhaled transformed into a three-colored flower that looked like a demonic face. It grinned ferociously, and then slowly disappeared.

His gaze swept across the ten trees in front of him. A moment ago, the poison had begun to flare up, and he had successfully used the Spring and Autumn tree against it. "So, the Spring and Autumn tree really can suppress the poison in me."

He flicked his sleeve, collecting up the rest of the trees. He adjusted his Cultivation base and then opened his eyes again and looked at the lake of blood. His eyes filled with determination.

"This whole place is really bizarre, as if it's been sealed somehow. Furthermore, it has this lake of blood... I've been stuck in here for two months, and other than the first time we came here, haven't experienced any real sense of danger. I shouldn't place all my hopes in the Perfect Foundation Pill. I should be prepared in case Chu Yuyan fails to concoct the pill. This is the strangest place in this whole location.

"In fact, I have the feeling that the reason this place is sealed to begin with has something to do with the lake of blood." He slowly stood up and walked out of the cave. He spit out an arc of electricity which turned into a mist that surrounded him, then began to slowly approach the lake of blood.

As soon as he stepped foot within the area one hundred meters surrounding the shore, ripples appeared on the calm surface. His eyes glittered, and he took another step.

The closer he got, the more ripples appeared. Gradually, roaring sounds echoed out and the dark green stone altar appeared. Waves roiled as it rose out from the surface of the lake, supported on the backs of the countless bloody bodies, whose faces were twisted in agony. The altar rose higher and higher.

The throne was there, seated upon which was the skeleton wearing a mask. More than half of the altar was visible.

Meng Hao stopped, and slowly walked backward. He found that as he did so, the altar also stopped rising up, and then slowly began to sink down.

"Very interesting," said Meng Hao, his eyes gleaming. He stopped

moving backward, and then resolutely strode forward. As he got closer, the men and women supporting the altar began to wail. The altar rose higher and higher. Soon, the entire fifty-meter altar had emerged out of the lake.

Meng Hao stopped. Looking down, he could see that there was some massive object concealed in the lake.

Although it appeared as if the altar was being lifted up by the men and women, in fact, it was really being pushed up by whatever it was that lurked in the depths of the lake.

Surrounded by his mist, Meng Hao stood there silently for a moment. Then he walked forward, entering the ten-meter region surrounding the lake. The altar lifted up, and suddenly, an enormous head rose up out of the lake of blood. The altar was located the very top of it!

It was about one hundred meters in diameter and was dark green in color. This was not the head of some living creature; it was formed out of rock. By the time Meng Hao reached the shore of the lake of blood, the head was completely visible.

Blood poured out of the orifices of the face, which was twisted into a hideous expression. Its mouth opened, and an archaic, howling voice could be heard.

“The Ancient Doom Clan, the Legacy of the Blood Immortal. Enter my sea of blood; nine will open in the Southern Domain; all creation will know. The first person... shall acquire the bloodline of the Blood Immortal!” The voice sounded out directly inside of Meng Hao’s head, filling it with its echoing roar.

# Chapter 117: A Tiny Little Punishment

Only Meng Hao could hear the sound of the voice. No one else would have been able to sense even a bit of it. Even though Chu Yuyan was in the volcano along with Meng Hao, she couldn't hear it either.

As the sound filled his head, Meng Hao's eyes filled with an intense look.

"The Ancient Doom Clan.... Don't tell me we're in the vicinity of the Ancient Temple of Doom!? The Legacy of the Blood Immortal. An Immortal...." Meng Hao was shocked. He was relatively familiar with all the various levels of Cultivation. After Nascent Soul was Spirit Severing, then Dao Seeking and finally Immortal Ascension.

However, in tens of thousands of years, only seven or eight people had ever succeeded in reaching that stage. Even reaching the Dao Seeking stage was not common.

"The Legacy of the Blood Immortal. Did that person just call himself Immortal, or did he actually reach Immortal Ascension...?" Even though he was excited, he suddenly thought of the battle between Patriarch Reliance and Lord Revelation, and the two words which had been uttered. Immortal Li.

His eyes flickered as he looked at the enormous head and its open mouth, beyond which seemed to be some sort of tunnel. Entering would signify the beginning of the pursuit of the Legacy.

"Nine will open in the southern lands, and all creation will know. Could it mean... maybe once I step in, then nine other entrances to the Legacy will open in the outside world? Then the wind and clouds will be disturbed, and everyone will know about it?" He hesitated, gazing at the mouth, deep in thought.

"It must be that way. There are nine entrances where people can enter to seek the Legacy. Among them, one will be selected to receive the Blood Immortal's legacy.... So, there are nine places similar to this. If one opens, then all of them open. I just wonder if anyone has opened it before...." Suddenly, he looked around at the shores of the lake. They were strewn



with ghastly, white bones. Many of the bones were skulls, and were human.

The skulls had marks of wear; obviously, they had existed here for many years. Perhaps it was because of the strangeness of this place that they hadn't been scattered, but instead remained here all this time.

Whatever the case, Meng Hao had no way to determine how long they had been here, nor any way to determine if they were intruders, or people sacrificed when this place was created.

He thought for a while, and eventually decided not to just rashly charge into the mouth entrance. He slowly walked backward. As he did, the giant head slowly sank back into the lake, along with the altar. By the time he reached the one hundred meter mark, everything was quiet.

As he walked backward, he flicked his sleeve, collecting some of the bones into his bag of holding. Then he stood there, looking at the lake of blood for a while, before turning and leaving.

Soon, he had returned to Chu Yuyan outside the fissure-like cave. Her face was pale, and she was concentrating on the pill furnace. She took out some medicinal herbs, squeezed the juice out of them, and then placed them in the furnace. Meng Hao sat down cross-legged a short distance away. A look of deep thought appeared in his eyes. He took out one of the skulls he had just acquired and examined it closely.

"If I can't determine the age of these bones, then I can't just casually go after the Legacy of the Blood Immortal." He thought back to everything that had happened in the State of Zhao, which had taught him the value of being cautious. He held up the skull in front of him looking at it closely.

Time slowly passed. Soon, five days had gone by. Chu Yuyan walked over to Meng Hao from the pill furnace. Looking exhausted, she tossed him a medicinal pill.

It was a deep blue color, and was very beautiful in appearance. It emanated a faint bluish glow, but no fragrant aroma.

"I failed once, but succeeded the second time. This is the pill you need.

Now give me some clothes.” She looked down at him, weariness in her eyes. This was the price to be paid for pill concocting.

Meng Hao took the medicinal pill and examined it closely. He put it into his bag of the Cosmos, and then retrieved another jade slip along with two complete sets of ingredients. He also pulled out a set of garments. He put them all down in front of him, whereupon Chu Yuyan picked them up and walked back into the cave. A while later, she emerged, wearing Meng Hao’s gown, her long hair spread out over her shoulders. She looked like an elegant, young maiden. She was tired, but that actually caused her to emanate a type of good looks different from before.

As Meng Hao looked at her, he realized that Elder Sister Xu could not match up with her in terms of beauty. In fact, Chu Yuyan was perhaps the most beautiful woman he had ever seen in his entire life. Only the beautiful young women he had seen at the bottom of the North Sea could come even close.

Now that she had changed clothes and covered up some of her nakedness, Chu Yuyan no longer looked so uneasy standing in front of Meng Hao. As she walked out, she caught sight of the skull that he had been examining.

Her eyes suddenly gleamed with a strange light, which almost immediately disappeared. “If you have nothing better to do,” she said coldly, “you could go stand watch by the shield. Maybe some Cultivators will pass by that could save us. That would be better than sitting around looking at an ancient skull.”

“How many tens of thousands of years have these skulls been here?” he asked suddenly.

She gave a cold laugh. It seemed changing clothes had restored her previous arrogance. Apparently, she assumed that since she was concocting pills that Meng Hao needed, he wouldn’t dare to treat her the way he had in the past. Ignoring him, she walked back to her pill concocting work area. Meng Hao laughed and slapped his bag of holding. A wooden sword appeared which shot directly toward her.

It was fast, and reached her in an instant. Given the state of her Cultivation base, she had no way to evade. Nor did she try. She looked back at Meng Hao arrogantly, a sneer in her eyes.

The tip of the sword was already at her neck. A grim, cold air emanated from her body. But her chin was lifted as high as ever, her eyes filled with mocking.

“You have three seconds to take your sword away,” she said coolly. “If you don’t, or if you harm me, then you won’t have anyone to concoct pills for you.” Her skin was white like snow, her head tilted arrogantly. Her eyes glittered like eyes as she stared at Meng Hao with disgust.

She was convinced that Meng Hao wouldn’t dare to make a move against her. The sword was simply a threat, and to Chu Yuyan, such threats were infantile and laughable.

She was the type of person who could not tolerate being wronged. Now that she had successfully created one of the pills, she could hold her head high and make Meng Hao think twice before trifling with her. She might even be able to get the upper hand.

“You’re right,” said Meng Hao, frowning. “Without you, I would have no way to concoct pills.” From the look of things, it seemed he really couldn’t do anything to her. However, he knew that this flame of rebellion must be snuffed out, lest it grow even more troublesome. He thought for a while, then suddenly smiled. When Chu Yuyan saw his smile, her heart began to thump inexplicably, and suddenly she didn’t feel the least bit at ease.

“In fact,” he said coolly, “if I offend you in any way, considering that you are the disciple of Grandmaster Pill Demon, you could easily make the pills incorrectly, or perhaps slip something fatal into them.” His tone was leisurely, and the look on his face enigmatic. Chu Yuyan felt even more uncomfortable. She had, of course, thought of doing just as he said. Killing Meng Hao ahead of time wouldn’t influence the lightning. But now, he had spoken out her very thoughts. She didn’t know what he was planning, but she still felt that her pill concoction would prevent him from harming her in. She gave a cold harrumph.

“What are you talking about?” she said coldly. It really felt to her as if his smile was amiss.

“The way that I, Meng, handle things is as such: if people don’t offend me, I don’t offend them. I promised to see you out of here, and I will not go back on my word. But don’t get arrogant because of the pill concocting. Do not try to gain the upper hand.”

The wooden sword suddenly flew back toward him, leaving behind a tiny nick on Chu Yuyan’s throat. She opened her mouth reflexively, and as she did so, Meng Hao slapped his bag of holding. A pink-colored medicinal pill appeared, which shot forward directly into her mouth. It dissolved as soon as it entered. Chu Yuyan retreated backwards, her expression filled with shock. She wanted to spit the pill out, but couldn’t.

“What pill did you just give me!?” she said, glaring at Meng Hao.

“You used a special technique as a facade to try to absorb my Cultivation base,” said Meng Hao coolly. “We still haven’t settled accounts over that. Think of this pill as a little punishment.” He then closed his eyes and ignored her.

Such behavior on his part only served to make Chu Yuyan more perturbed. Her pill-concocting skill was exceptional, but she really had no idea what pill she had just consumed. She gritted her beautiful teeth. Suddenly, hot steam began to accumulate within her. It quickly filled her, causing alarm to appear on her face.

She immediately sat down cross-legged in meditation, attempting to suppress it. But her Cultivation base was reduced to almost nothing; currently, she could only utilize the power of the third level of Qi Condensation. How could that possibly be enough to defuse the pill?

She sat in meditation for the time it takes an incense stick to burn. A roaring filled her head, and she began to lose the ability to even think. Then, she slipped into a deep hallucination.

It was at this time that Meng Hao opened his eyes. They were calm, not the least bit agitated. The pill from just now had been acquired in the mountainous valley area, when the toad geezer had given him a variety of

poison pills as tribute.

He originally had never intended to give it to Chu Yuyan, but she had really been asking for trouble. Her arrogance had flared with her successful concoction of the pill. He had no choice but to wipe out that bluster. In order to reduce her haughtiness, Meng Hao had chosen to give her the pill.

His eyes were clear and bright, his mind made up. After descending into this volcano, he had placed Chu Yuyan under his complete control. She had no room to maneuver.

Her stubbornness and arrogance surfaced on multiple occasions even down to today... and yet she was still unable to free herself from Meng Hao's control.

# Chapter 118: Without Entering Mount Tianshan, Immortal Ascension is Impossible

Meng Hao looked calmly at Chu Yuyan and took a few steps back. He had begun studying Confucianism and Daoism at a young age. Despite the incredible changes he had experienced, those teachings still existed in his heart. It's not that he was incapable of taking advantage of someone in trouble, but when it came to morality, he had a bottom line. He wouldn't touch Chu Yuyan.

She was his enemy, not his friend. Punishing her was one thing, but to sink to such a level of depravity would go against his very being. He might not be a complete gentleman, but he wasn't a depraved scumbag.

There were some things that he would never do. Everyone has a bottom line. To Meng Hao, it was about principles, and morality.

He thought again about the Perfect Foundation Pill. He settled his Qi and calmed his mind, then stepped onto a flying sword and flew up into the air.

Enough time passed for an incense stick to burn. Everything around Chu Yuyan was quiet. She was finally unconscious, her Qi feeble, as if she were suffering from some serious illness.

Meng Hao returned. When he landed onto the ground, he looked at Chu Yuyan and let out a soft sigh. Producing another set of clothing from his bag of the Cosmos, he covered her, and then sat down cross-legged nearby.

Time slowly passed. Four hours went by before Chu Yuyan's eyes opened. As soon as they did, they filled with confusion. Then they flashed as she seemed to remember something. She sat there silently.

She didn't yell or flip out. Instead, she silently walked into the cave. Some time passed, and she came back out, her clothes back in order. Her

face was pale, and she looked very weak and tired. She gave Meng Hao a look filled with complexity.

She hadn't lost her memory. It was quite the opposite, in fact. She very clearly remembered every single thing that had happened, including Meng Hao flying off into the sky.

Meng Hao's eyes opened, and he gave her a level look. "I did nothing to harm you," he said slowly. "That medicinal pill was a punishment for your attempt to harm my Cultivation base. You need to understand the truth of the situation here. My instructions, are everything."

There was no arrogance left in Chu Yuyan. Her feelings regarding Meng Hao were incredibly complex.

Yes, she hated him. But under the circumstances just now, he had chosen to leave rather than touch her. Chu Yuyan didn't want to, but she actually felt appreciation mixed together with her hatred. The complex feelings within her felt like floodwaters threatening to submerge her.

She didn't know how many similar medicinal pills Meng Hao had, but from his actions, she could guess that even though the pill she was concocting was important to him, he wasn't worried about her trying to poison him by adding or changing the recipe.

"The pill formula he gave me is very strange. Because of the interactions between the various ingredients, to change the formula ratios is simply beyond my ability. I wouldn't be able to produce a complete pill....

"However, even if I did successfully adjust the formula, given this guy's personality, it's possible he might make me consume it.... Actually, it's impossible at all to tell if he will even consume it himself. Maybe he'll catch a viper and force it to consume it.

"In fact, it's even possible... that the pill doesn't need to be consumed. Maybe he'll use some other method to melt it and provoke the lightning. Maybe that's why he doesn't care." She frowned. It was really impossible to figure out the answer, and she had no idea what to do. She looked at Meng Hao, her expression torn. The more she thought about him and the deepness of his schemes, the more frightened she became.

“Compared to him, Wang Tengfei really is inferior.” She sighed. After thinking for a moment, she took a deep breath and said. “That skull has been here for several tens of thousands of years. Actually... I know where we are, and I know what this place is. When I saw the altar in the lake of blood, I started to suspect. I’ve thought about it a lot since then, and finally realized where we are.”

Her voice soft, she continued, “This is one of the two undiscovered locations of the Legacy of the Blood Immortal. In total, there are nine. From ancient times until now, seven have appeared. This means there have been a total of seven chances throughout history to acquire the Legacy. Whenever a new location appears, it sets the entire Southern Domain abuzz. There are rules governing this place. Only Foundation Establishment Cultivators can enter. Any who does, has a chance at acquiring the Legacy.

“Every time the tournament begins, the previously discovered Legacy zones will emit a glow of blood that lasts for nine days. After nine days have passed, whoever is the first person to enter into the red glow, as long as they meet the requirement of having a Cultivation base at the Foundation Establishment stage, will be transported to the Blood Immortal’s Mountain.

“When the Legacy tournament begins, it will last for a maximum of nine months. Only one person is permitted into each Legacy zone. From tens of thousands of years ago when the first Blood Immortal Legacy zone appeared, all the way until now, there have been seven. This means that there have been seven Legacy tournaments. Some people have had the luck to acquire various rewards, but down to this day, no one has succeeded in acquiring the true Legacy.

“Of the nine total Legacy zones, there are two remaining. Throughout all these years, no one has discovered their location. Therefore, there has been no way to begin the eighth Legacy tournament.”

As he heard all of these things, Meng Hao’s eyes began to narrow. “Who is the Blood Immortal?” he asked.



“I refuse to believe you didn’t go yourself to examine the lake of blood,” she said calmly. “And I also refuse to believe you are unaware that underneath the surface of the lake is a massive head with an open mouth. The seven other Blood Immortal Legacy zones throughout the world all have lakes of blood and altars. Underneath each altar is a mouth. Furthermore, I refuse to believe you didn’t hear the voice of the Legacy. I have no proof, but my intuition tells me that you’ve been there, and you know. You’re a cautious person, so you didn’t dare to step foot inside without first bringing back those skulls to analyze, to see if you could determine their age.”

“You didn’t answer my question.”

“The Ancient Temple of Doom. It was once a holy place for the Ancient Doom Clan. They were not looked upon with favor by the Heavens, and were punished with tribulation. There were three famous Immortals amongst them whose names were passed down through the generations after. One of them was the Blood Immortal.

“Anyone who acquires his Legacy will be qualified to fight on the path to Immortality, and step foot onto the Immortality Pillar.” Chu Yuyan’s voice was soft as she spoke. She continued.

“The path to Immortality is an arduous one. According to the ancient legends, it can be found only on Mount Tianshan. It is not a mountain on the earth, but in the sky. On its peak is an Immortality Pillar. By stepping onto the pillar and knocking on the door of the Southern Heaven, the Immortal realm shall be opened. You shall be bathed with Immortality. With one step, you shall achieve Immortal Ascension.

“Since ancient times, countless heroes have fought over the ability to tread the path to Immortal Ascension. After all, if you analyze the character ‘Immortal (仙)’ , you will find that it is composed of the character ‘person (人)’ and the character ‘mountain (山)’ . That mountain is Mount Tianshan, and the person... is only one person!

“In ten thousand years, one person achieved Immortal Ascension!

“However, there is another understanding regarding the character

‘Immortal (仙)’ . According to this understanding, first is the character ‘enter (入),’ then is the character ‘mountain (山)’ . Combined, they mean Immortal. It is a simple truth. Without entering Mount Tianshan, one cannot achieve Immortal Ascension!” She looked at Meng Hao, explaining things that were only known to members of the five great Sects and three great Clans in the Southern Domain.

What is Immortality? A person and a mountain!

What is Immortality? Entering the mountain!

In ten thousand years, one person entered the mountain, one person achieved Immortal Ascension!

Meng Hao’s eyes began to shine brightly, but then, just as quickly, the glow faded. Considering that he was just a Foundation Establishment Cultivator, Immortal Ascension was far, far away for him. For him to think about it now was really just too extravagant; it was basically a daydream.

“Before the path to Immortality are the Dao Seeking Stones, which only exist in the three Danger Zones. Dao Seeking is difficult, but before that is Spirit Severing and its three Sunderings. Each Sundering requires enlightenment, and gives life. To be honest, I don’t really know what all of this means. But when I was young, my father would speak these words to me and tell me to place them within my heart, and never forget them for the rest of my life.” Chu Yuyan played with her hair, no longer looking at Meng Hao. She walked back to the pill furnace and slowly sat down. Taking out the jade slip with the information about the pill formula, she closed her eyes and began to analyze it.

Everything grew quiet.

Meng Hao looked at Chu Yuyan. She was different now. Her words continued to echo in his heart, and he analyzed them bit by bit. Based on the look on her face, as well as his own speculations regarding the Legacy of the Blood Immortal, he was now seventy to eighty percent sure that what she had said was the truth.

After some time passed, he spoke. “Why did you give me so much detailed information?”

“Because,” she said softly, looking at him, “I hope that you will go after the Blood Immortal’s Legacy and then... die inside. Then I can finally be rid of you. Many things have happened that shouldn’t have.” Having said this, she closed her eyes and continued to seek enlightenment regarding the pill formula.

Meng Hao suddenly laughed. He didn’t mind hearing her words. If she hadn’t spoken just now, then he would have grown suspicious. After all this time spent with Chu Yuyan, he was starting to understand her personality much better.

“The Legacy of the Blood Immortal. I wonder if I should go in after it....” he thought, his eyes flickering. It would be impossible for him to not be a bit tempted. A Legacy which could send waves throughout the entire Southern Domain. Anything related to the word ‘Immortal’ would drive Cultivators crazy.

# Chapter 119: The Legacy Shocks the Southern Domain

“This Legacy tournament must surely involve some dangers that are impossible to imagine. If I’m careless, I’ll likely fail and die.... But with great risk comes great reward. If something is riskier, it shows that there is more chance for reward. If there isn’t such danger, then fine. But if there is.... Well, if I don’t go, then I’ll regret it for the rest of my life!”

Determination filled his eyes as he continued to think over what Chu Yuyan had told him. However, after some time, he hadn’t come up with any new ideas about why she had told him so much.

“She was provoking me. Maybe her true goal was to get me to go in. Or perhaps it wasn’t.... The chances of the latter are small. Perhaps she hopes that after entering and starting the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament, it will attract the attention of the outside world, and perhaps give the Violet Fate Sect a better chance of tracking her down.” His eyes flashed as he looked over at her.

“If I don’t go, nothing will happen. But if that’s what she wanted, why would she go into such detail right now, especially in a way that would make me hesitant? I wonder... what is she thinking? What is her true goal...?” His eyes flickered as he thought. Finally, he closed his eyes and began to meditate.

Time passed slowly. Soon, half a month had gone by. Chu Yuyan finally concocted the second pill. However, by the time another month passed, her attempts at the third and fourth pills had failed.

Meng Hao could not concoct pills, but it was clear to him that she was not failing intentionally. Instead, the pill concoction was becoming more difficult. Throughout the month, Meng Hao didn’t spend time thinking about the Legacy of the Blood Immortal. He seemed to have put it out of mind.

One day, he slowly stood up and hopped onto a flying sword, shooting up through the mists to go observe the shield.

In the past half month, he had made it a practice to go up every ten days or so to observe the shield. Every time he left, Chu Yuyan would observe his departure expressionlessly.

This time, after Meng Hao left, she waited about four hours, then suddenly lifted her head, her eyes flashing. She frowned, as if she were having some problem with the pill concoction process. Then she stood up, looking off into the mists. Shortly after, she began walking toward the region of the lake of blood. When she got there, she looked around, then turned and returned to the pill furnace. It seemed as if whatever question was in her mind had been answered. She continued with her pill concoction.

Another half month passed. Finally, she was able to successfully concoct the third and fourth pills. She then began working on the fifth pill. As far as Meng Hao was concerned, this was the last pill. Once it was finished, then all seven of the minor pills would be ready.

More time slipped by. In the blink of an eye, two months were gone. Meng Hao and Chu Yuyan had now been trapped in the volcano for half a year. Within the two months, Chu Yuyan would occasionally leave the area of the cave. Sometimes it was when Meng Hao was watching her, other times it was when he was away. It seemed as if every time she had some problem with the formula, she would pace about. However, she would never enter the region within 100 meters of the lake of blood. She would always stop at that mark.

Finally one day, under Meng Hao's watchful eye, she stood up. Frowning, she walked into the mists. When she reached the 100 meter mark, her eyes flashed. Suddenly, the power of her Cultivation base flared up, and she sped toward the lake of blood at top speed.

As she neared it, the surface of the lake began to ripple. The altar appeared, followed by the enormous stone head. The mouth gaped, a passageway awaiting for the Legacy tournament participant to enter.

Chu Yuyan's eyes flickered with excitement as she raced forward. She was almost leaping into the air by the time she reached the mouth. Just as

she was about to enter, a light laugh filled the air. A sword aura flickered, shooting toward Chu Yuyan.

As soon as she heard the laughter, her face went pale. Ignoring the approach of the wooden sword, she gritted her straight, white teeth and charged forward. There was only half a meter between her and the large stone mouth.

Suddenly, a black net appeared, moving at a speed much faster than Chu Yuyan. It immediately enveloped her, and she was not able to move beyond that last half meter. The wooden sword scooped her and tossed her back to the lake shore.

Standing nearby within the mists was Meng Hao. His face expressionless, he slowly walked forward.

Chu Yuyan's face was pale, and her eyes flashed with venomous hatred as she glared at Meng Hao. The instant he had brought back that skull to study, she had put all the pieces together regarding the Legacy of the Blood Immortal. Furthermore, everything she had said those months ago was true. She thought she knew Meng Hao, and understood his innate skepticism. She intentionally tried to make him think that there was something suspicious going on. Given his nature, he would certainly suspect her. Based on all of this, she knew that he would not easily be convinced to act. That would give her time.

In the following months, she had made it a practice to go for walks; she did this so that Meng Hao would not find it unusual. Today, she had finally made her attempt, never having imagined that she would fail.

"You really are quite patient," said Meng Hao. "I gave you a whole three months." At the moment, he was disinclined to explain to her how he had seen through her plan. "You have one month. I want to see the fifth pill. Now, get back to your concocting." He made a snatching motion with his hand, retrieving the large net.

Chu Yuyan bit her lip and got to her feet. Without another glance at Meng Hao, she made a bitter departure.

"So, she really did want to go in." Meng Hao looked thoughtfully over his

shoulder at Chu Yuyan's departing figure. A cold smile lifted the corners of his mouth. Now, his doubts were dispelled. He walked forward and entered the mouth of the enormous statue.

The instant he entered the mouth, he disappeared, and the lake of blood began to seethe. A roaring sound rippled out, and the lake of blood transformed into a blood-colored mist, which dispersed in all directions.

An archaic voice echoed out from within the blood mist, resounding out from within the volcano. "The Ancient Doom Clan, the Legacy of the Blood Immortal. Enter my sea of blood; nine will open in the Southern Domain; all creation will know. The first person... shall acquire the bloodline of the Blood Immortal!" When it hit Chu Yuyan's ears, she staggered, and her face grew pale. She gnawed on her lip as a look of extreme bitterness filled her face.

"If only I had realized earlier what this place was...." She shook her head. Her face was pallid. Her hatred toward Meng Hao, and toward fate itself, filled her with complicated emotions.

Meanwhile, outside in the Southern Domain, there were seven different locations, out from all of which suddenly could be heard a massive roaring. As soon as the sound raged out, the sky above the entire Southern Domain turned the color of blood.

From each of the seven locations, an archaic voice rumbled out.

"The Ancient Doom Clan, the Legacy of the Blood Immortal. Enter my sea of blood; nine will open in the Southern Domain; all creation will know. The first person... shall acquire the bloodline of the Blood Immortal!"

The echoing sound immediately sent the Southern Domain stirring. Regardless of their Sect or background, any Cultivators near the seven Blood Immortal Legacy zones looked on in astonishment. They immediately shot off in various directions at incredible speed.

"The Blood Immortal Legacy zones have re-appeared!"

"The eighth Blood Immortal Legacy zone has been discovered. Now that

it's been entered, the other seven Legacy zones have opened. The eighth Blood Immortal Legacy tournament is about to begin!"

"There will only be nine total chances to get the Blood Immortal Legacy. Over the past tens of thousands of years, it has happened seven times. This is the eighth time. If no one acquires the Legacy this time, who knows how many years will pass before the ninth tournament arrives...."

The other seven locations were places where previous Blood Immortal Legacy tournaments had begun. Whenever a new location appeared, it would cause a huge sensation in the Southern Domain. The eyes of countless Cultivators grew red with desire. Although no one had ever acquired the Legacy itself, in every race, lucky participants emerged with various magical items and techniques.

As the news spread, the five great Sects and three great Clans were the first to react. After them, other Clans followed in taking action.

At the moment, the roaring sound rippled out, and the words of the archaic voice echoed loudly. The entire Southern Domain buzzed with action. The Wang Clan, one of the three great Clans, was one of the first to act. Several hundred beams of light flew out, followed by several enormous flying battleships, filled with the disciples of the Wang Clan. They made their way toward the nearest Blood Immortal Legacy zone.

White-robed Wang Tengfei stood on the second boat in the procession. His hands were clasped behind his back as he stared coldly at someone on the ship ahead in the lead position. There stood a man wearing a similar white robe. He closely resembled Wang Tengfei, although he looked a little bit older. He frowned in thought.

This was Wang Lihai, Wang Tengfei's older brother. He was a Dao Child of the Wang Clan, which was a position higher than that held by a trifling Chosen. He was in the late Foundation Establishment Stage, and could achieve Core Formation at almost any time. He was surrounded by various elite members of the Wang Clan, including his Dao Protector, a Nascent Soul Clan Uncle.

As for Wang Tengfei... he stood there silently, hands clasped rigidly



behind his back. One of the fingers of his right hand looked very different from the others. It was as transparent as crystal, within which circulated tiny black spiralling threads. It looked extremely bizarre.

Standing next to him was Wang Xifan, the man who had almost killed Meng Hao with a single look that day, years ago. “If things hadn’t happened the way they did in the State of Zhao,” he said coolly, “You wouldn’t be at the early Foundation Establishment stage right now. You would be at the middle stage. You would still be behind your brother, but not as far as you are now.

“I will exceed my brother,” said Wang Tengfei calmly. “I will become a Dao Child!”

“There will only be one chance to acquire the Legacy of the Blood Immortal,” said Wang Xifan, his eyes flashing. He frowned. “It’s too bad there hasn’t been any word from the Violet Fate Sect about Yuyan. Apparently, she’s in a critical stage of secluded meditation. Otherwise, she would be able to provide you with some assistance.”

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If you forgot how Wang Tengfei lost his finger, please re-read Chapter 32: This Finger Brought me Humiliation, Today, I Cripple it!

If you forgot how Wang Xifan almost killed Meng Hao, please re-read Chapter 35: I’m Not Willing! (also the same chapter where we meet our favorite sexy female antagonist, Chu Yuyan!)

# Chapter 120: The Five Sects and Three Clans of the Southern Domain

Meanwhile in the Golden frost Sect, one of the five great Sects of the Southern Domain, hundreds of beams of light shot whistling up into the sky. These were Sect members who didn't need the aid of magical flight items. Up ahead of them, the person in the lead ripped open a hole in the air, into which the others entered.

Zhao Shanling was amongst them, carrying a gold greatsword, clad in a set of armor. He moved with incredible speed.

The Legacy of the Blood Immortal had sent the great Sects and Clans into a frenzy. In addition to the Wang Clan and the Golden frost Sect, there was the Song Clan, another of the three great Clans. Several hundred Cultivators emerged, all of them outstanding talents. Amongst them was Eccentric Song, whose treasures Meng Hao had stolen in the State of Zhao.

The most powerful Sect in the Southern Domain was the Solitary Sword Sect. Hundreds of sword auras shot up. It was a shocking sight. Every Cultivator amongst them stood on a sword. The hundreds of sword auras seemed as if they could split open the sky. At the front of the group were seven people with stern looks on their faces. One of the seven was none other than Chen Fan!

Chen Fan's face was filled with righteousness. He wore a long white robe and stood on a dark green sword. His Cultivation base billowed out; he was at the early Foundation Establishment stage!

In front of the seven was a middle-aged man with a cold expression and a fierce killing intent. This was none other than Chen Fan's master, Zhou Yanyun.

Wind whipped the clouds into turmoil above the Southern Domain as Wu Dingqiu of the Violet Fate Sect shot through the air along with hundreds of Violet Fate disciples. As they flew through the sky, Wu

Dingqiu's brow was furrowed, and he seemed to be thinking about something very important. This, in turn, caused the others from the Violet Fate Sect to be incredibly quiet.

"Yuyan is missing," he thought. "She was seen chasing after some Cultivator. Then that roc flew through, kicking up a whirlwind. She... where is she...? Her life slip is still intact, which means that she's safe." He sighed. Chu Yuyan was very important to the Violet Fate Sect. In fact, she was so important that many people in the Sect had opposed her engagement to Wang Tengfei.

Beams of prismatic light could be seen in the sky all over the Southern Domain, flying toward the seven Blood Immortal Legacy zones.

Amongst the great Sects and Clans, the Li clan was the most secretive. They rarely sent Clan members out into the world, and when they did, few people were aware of it. In fact, when the Blood Immortal Legacy zones opened, they only sent out five people!

Of those five people, two were old Dao Protectors of the Nascent Soul stage. The rest were at the Foundation Establishment stage, two men and one woman. These three were Chosen of the Li Clan, whom few outsiders had even heard of.

"Years ago the Patriarch revealed the secret that the eight Blood Immortal Legacy tournament would fall into the hands of the Li Clan," said one of the old men. He wore a long black robe, and was tall and emaciated. He looked back at the three behind him. "The eighth tournament has arrived. Daoyi, the Legacy belongs to you, this is certain. As for you two, just observe, and take the opportunity to learn something."

The most mysterious of the five great Sects was the Blood Demon Sect. They sent even fewer people than the Li Clan, only two.

One was old, one was young. The young man wore a scarlet robe, and appeared to be about sixteen or seventeen. He emanated a fierce killing aura. Located between his eyebrows was a mark of blood, which would occasionally let out a glow that covered half of his face. Beneath his feet was a mist of blood, within which could be seen countless fierce faces that

appeared to be howling. This young man looked anything but ordinary.

If Meng Hao were there, or perhaps Fatty or Little Tiger, they would instantly recognize him. The young man looked exactly like Wang Youcai, from six or seven years ago. If it really was him, then it would mean he hadn't changed at all over the years. Very strange!

Of the five great Sects of the Southern Domain, four sprang into action. Only the Black Sieve Sect did not. In the main hall of the Sect, six people sat cross-legged, their bodies concealed in shadows. Within the hall, everything was silent.

An archaic, sinister voice suddenly rang out. "So, the time has come for the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament.... Should we dispatch some people?"

"The Legacy of the Blood Immortal might be powerful, but no one has acquired it even after tens of thousands of years. Comparatively speaking, the ancient map we discovered is much more important!"

"We can't conceal the matter, though, so we won't. That will cause more chaos, which will serve to our advantage."

"If we succeed in our endeavor, the entire structure of the Southern Domain will be changed. As for the item, the Dao of the Black Sieve Sect will be refined, which is luck for the Sect!"

"I agree that we should not dispatch anyone to the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament. We've studied this ancient map for a long time. Even the Patriarchs view it with high importance and have studied it several times. We can take advantage of the suspicion which will arise from our lack of participation in the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament. We can guide more people here, whereupon their curiosity will increase. Then, we can begin the next phase of our plan."

Outside of the Black Sieve Sect's main temple hall, several hundred solemn-faced disciples had gathered. They had been called here to wait to for orders from the Sect Elders.

Standing off to the side in the crowd was Xu Qing. She wore a standard

white robe. Her face seemed thinner than before, and her frame somewhat frail. Although she had always been a cold person, she didn't seem to be very happy in the Black Sieve Sect.

Her Cultivation base was only at the ninth level of Qi Condensation.

A charming young woman appeared next to Xu Qing. Her voice low, she said, "Junior Sister Xu, Elder Brother Chen said to give you one last chance. If you agree to what he wants, he'll fight to get you a Foundation Establishment Pill. Come on, don't be stupid. If you provoke Elder Brother Chen, then...." Even in the midst of giving her advice. Xu Qing raised her head and looked at her coldly.

"You don't need to bring up this matter again, Elder Sister Xue. Please, have some self-respect!"

The girl surnamed Xue sneered. "You're just an uncivilized biddy from a backwater nation. You try to act high and mighty, but you're really an idiot. Elder Brother Chen taking a liking to you is good luck for you. This matter is beyond your control!"

Xu Qing didn't say anything. However, her delicate hands clenched tightly within her sleeves, until they turned pale white.

The Xue girl laughed coldly and continued to deride her. "And as for that Cosmetic Enhancement Pill, concocted in some crude, tiny Sect on some crappy mountain. Elder Sister Han wanted to trade you for it to give to her servant girl, but you refused. You really have a one-track mind. What a waste of your good looks."

Xu Qing's face was pale white, and she gnawed on her lower lip, but she said nothing.

Eventually, an old man wearing a dark green robe emerged from the main temple hall. He flicked his sleeve, and mist began to billow out. An enormous Feng Shui compass flew down from the sky. The Xue girl stopped her ridicule and hopped up onto it, along with the surrounding disciples, including Xu Qing. Under the control of the old man, the Feng Shui compass carried them off into the distance.

Wind and clouds roiled above the State of Zhao. Because the Black Sieve Sect didn't participate, the seven Blood Immortal Legacy zones were each occupied by one of the other four Sects, or one of the three Clans. Other could only yield to their approach. However, despite their high position, the great Clans and Sects could not force outsiders to leave. That would have raised public indignation. They simply cleared a way through to wait for the glow of blood to appear and the Legacy tournament to begin.

Time passed by. A few days later, the Blood Immortal's sacrificial altars began to thrum. Everything began to shake, and finally, a bloody screen appeared. Within the blood screen, a gateway slowly came to be visible. In this instant, all the Foundation Establishment Cultivators at the seven Blood Immortal sacrificial altars felt the desire to surge forward.

However... the gateway would only permit one person to enter. That right went to the first person who made it through. Only if that person died, or intentionally emerged to rest, could a second person enter.

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It was a vast world, with blue skies and white clouds. There was a feeling of purity, difficult to describe, which appeared in the hearts of everyone who entered.

Looking up, the sky was filled with an enormous sacrificial altar, dark green in color. At the top of the altar, sitting on an enormous stone throne, was a person.

It was a skeleton, clothed in a blood-colored robe. On his face was a featureless silver mask. He sat there, unmoving.

The altar seemed to fill nearly half the sky of this world. All of the people who entered were able to see the person on top.

The Legacy of the Blood Immortal! There was no need to say it.... this person was the deceased Blood Immortal!

Beneath the dark green sacrificial altar were nine enormous spell matrixes. Each spell matrix seemed to be filled with a whirlpool of slowly rotating stars. The nine spell matrixes were like nine gigantic steps,

leading up through the white clouds to the sacrificial altar.

Anyone who could pass through the ninth spell matrix, would then be able to step foot onto the dark green sacrificial altar.

However, since ancient times, no one had ever been able to do so!

At the moment, Meng Hao stood silently outside the first spell matrix, his eyes glittering. Suddenly, seven indistinct figures appeared around him.

He couldn't tell whether these people were men or women, nor could he determine their age. Even their clothes were unclear; their entire forms were indistinct blurs. However, Meng Hao was able to see that all of them were looking around at each other.

Suddenly, an archaic, emotionless voice rang out. "The Legacy of the Blood Immortal, the Nine Matrixes are opened. Eight Legacy competitors have arrived, but only one can acquire the Legacy of the Blood Immortal.

"The eight of you will not be able to hear each other speak, nor will you be able to see the magic each other uses. You will be unable to attack each other. You will only be able to see these indistinct blurs. This is because... the eight of you are all in different locations. However, there is one thing in common about your locations; they all contain the same dark green sacrificial altar, and the same spiritual energy.

"The Legacy tournament will be open for nine months. At every matrix, you will have the option to depart. Any time during the nine months, you may choose to continue on to the next matrix. You may use any method you wish, including trickery or special Sect or Clan powers. The first person to break into the ninth matrix, will be the second generation Blood Immortal!

"There are no rules here. Now, each of you must produce a drop of blood filled with your essence. It will magically transform into a Blood Divinity. There are countless types of Blood Divinity. As for which one your blood will create... that will be dependent on luck and fate.

"Do not forget, absorbing spiritual energy will cause your Blood Divinity

to grow more powerful. This is because your Blood Divinity... is a key factor in whether or not you acquire the Legacy. And now, let the Eighth Blood Immortal Legacy tournament... begin!"

As soon as the voice finished speaking, eight dark green beams of light shot out from the altar and flew down toward Meng Hao and the others.

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If you would like to re-read chapters relevant to the various characters mentioned here, you can re-read the following:

For Zhao Shanling, Zhou Yanyun, Chen Fan and Xu Qing, check out Chapter 41: A Sensation in the State of Zhao! and Chapter 42: Who Dares to Touch Him!?

For Eccentric Song and Wu Dingqiu, check out Chapter 48: Eccentric Song and Wu Dingqiu and the few chapters after that.

For Wang Youcai, check out Chapter 1: Scholar Meng Hao, Chapter 19: The Wind Stirs Again , and Chapter 72: A True Man (the relevant part in this chapter is only one line in the middle, but relatively important...

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# Chapter 121: Meng Hao's Blood Divinity

Meng Hao's heart pounded as he stood there. He took a deep breath. As soon as he had stepped foot into the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament, he'd found that his Cultivation base was completely restored. No longer was he stuck at the seventh level of Qi Condensation, but rather, was back at the early Foundation Establishment stage.

After hearing the words spoken by the archaic voice, Meng Hao knew why Chu Yuyan had wanted to enter this place.

"This place can recover your Cultivation base. If it stays that way after leaving, then that was obviously Chu Yuyan's first goal. Furthermore, there must be some tricky ways that she could... alert people on the outside as to her identity, and then figure out a way to lead them to the volcano." His eyes flashed as he looked at the dark green beam of light in front of him.

The dark green light was a formless mass, blurry and indistinct, as if life were brewing inside.

The other seven blurry figures around him seemed to be similarly studying the dark green lights. Soon, one of the figures spit out a mouthful of blood, which was absorbed by the green light. The light turned the color of blood, and then the cry of a phoenix sounded out from within. The clear sound filled the area as a miniature, finger-sized Blood Phoenix flew out and circled around.

When the Blood Phoenix emerged, the Cultivators surrounding the seven Blood Immortal Legacy zones throughout the Southern Domain were instantly shocked.

On the blood screen above each of the seven locations, images appeared... of Meng Hao and the eight others inside the Blood Immortal world.

The Blood Immortal Legacy tournament was very unique; outsiders were able to observe what was going on inside. When the competitors charged into the spell matrixes, people observing would be able to see it clearly.

Although they couldn't make out all the details, they would be able to see who succeeded and who didn't.

Anyone with skill would also be able to observe the skill matrixes and learn from them. Everyone heard the archaic voice say that there were no rules; no matter the method used, the first person to pass the ninth spell matrix would be the second generation Blood Immortal.

A Legacy tournament with no rules. In some ways, this revealed the arrogance and power of the Blood Immortal. Any Cultivator in the world could observe and study the nine matrixes, and yet despite that, in tens of thousands of years, and seven tournaments, no one had ever successfully passed the ninth matrix. Anyone who had managed to enter it, had died.

Because of the open nature of the Legacy tournament, anyone who participated came with ample preparations. Many of the people who watched on the outside had heard various rumors about the Legacy of the Blood Immortal. This was why when the Blood Phoenix emerged, many people were surprised.

"So a Blood Phoenix emerged! Among the Blood Divinities, the Blood Phoenix and the Blood Dragon both grow very quickly. I remember reading in the ancient records about the sixth Legacy tournament, when a Blood Phoenix ended up being as powerful as a Nascent Soul eccentric!"

"I wonder which Sect's disciple it was who got so lucky this time..."

A buzz of conversation arose around the seven Legacy tournament zones. Near the fifth zone, Eccentric Song of the Song Clang stood there looking pleased. He said nothing, but based on tiny clues he'd spotted, he knew that the person who had acquired the Blood Phoenix was his fellow Clan member Song Jia.

"Excellent," he thought. "Maybe there really will be a chance for that Song Jia girl to acquire the Legacy." His eyes shined with anticipation.

Meanwhile back inside the Legacy zone, the second, third and fourth competitors spit heart's blood into the dark green beams. Each of them received different Blood Divinities.

One was a majestic blood-red deer. The second was a Blood Tiger, which let out a roar when it appeared. But these two paled in comparison to the third. The third Blood Divinity was a Blood Dragon!

Its appearance was fierce, and its howls shook the entire area. A commotion instantly broke out in the outside world.

“A Blood Dragon!!”

“Four thousand years ago, in the seventh Blood Immortal Legacy tournament, a Chosen from the Li Clan acquired a Blood Dragon. He was the first person from time immemorial to pass the eighth matrix!!”

Outside of the Legacy zone, the two old members of the Li Clan stood there with expressionless faces. The appearance of the Blood Dragon was not surprising to them at all. The person who had acquired it was none other than one of the Li Clan’s Chosen of the current generation, Li Daoyi.

Before the roaring could die down, the fifth, sixth and seventh Blood Deities appeared within the Legacy zone. One was a Xuanwu turtle, the other a Blood Wolf, and the last was... shockingly... a tiny blood-colored sprite!

The blood-colored sprite looked similar to the Nascent Soul of a Cultivator. Its appearance sent the Cultivators in the outside world reeling in shock. Even the two old members of the Li Clan looked amazed. Every member of every Clan and Sect that was present were mind-blown.

“Since ancient times, there has never been a human-shaped Blood Divinity, not in any of the seven tournaments!”

“It’s hard to say what this Blood Divinity will grow into, it’s never been seen before. Who knows if it can measure up to the Blood Phoenix and Blood Dragon.”

As the buzz of conversation filled the air, the Elder from the most mysterious of the five great Sects, the Blood Demon Sect, sat cross-legged looking at the scene on the blood screen. His eyes were fixed on the blurry figure which had acquired the blood-colored sprite. A moment passed, and he nodded. He knew that this person was none other than his Sect’s

disciple.

Within the Blood Immortal Legacy Zone, Meng Hao looked at the seven other people and the different Blood Divinities that had emerged to hover around their blurry figures. They all looked beyond ordinary in every way.

“These people must all be various Chosen from the Southern Domain....” Meng Hao looked over them. “I wonder what will emerge for me!?” His eyes glittering, he pushed down on his chest. His Cultivation base shuddered, and he coughed up a mouthful of blood.

The blood was from his Cultivation base, and it was instantly sucked in by the dark green glow. At the moment, it was not just he who was concentrating on the result; the other seven people were watching, as well as everyone in the outside world. There was no more buzz of conversation outside; everyone watched Meng Hao on the giant screen.

The black glow immediately turned the color of blood, whereupon a faint but powerful cry rang out from within. As soon as they heard the sound, the seven people, as well as the tiny deer-shaped Blood Divinity, all began to tremble. Next, the Blood Wolf, the Xuanwu Turtle, and the Blood Tiger all seemed as if they couldn’t take the sound, and began to shake.

The Blood Dragon and Blood Phoenix both began to emit looks of hostility, glaring toward Meng Hao. Only the blood-colored sprite looked on expressionlessly, not even moving.

“What will emerge for this person.... It’s a tiny little roar, but the Blood Divinities all seem shaken. Even the Blood Dragon and Blood Phoenix appear hostile....”

“Could it be another Blood Divinity that has never before appeared?”

It was at this moment that a roaring filled the air, and the bloody glow in front of Meng Hao began to ripple. An instant later, his Blood Divinity appeared in front of him. It was .... a tiny puppy with glistening eyes, the size of a finger!

The puppy looked ordinary in every way. There didn’t seem to be anything special about it at all. However, as soon as it appeared, the

hostility within the Blood Phoenix and Blood Dragon seemed to grow stronger.

“It’s a dog!”

“That’s definitely never appeared before. I’ve never even heard of such a thing. From the very first Blood Immortal Legacy tournament to now, there has never been a Blood Divinity which was a dog!”

Around the seven Legacy zones in the Southern Domain, the sound of joking and laughter immediately rose up. Inside, everything was quiet. Meng Hao looked at the puppy floating in front of him, then around at the other Blood Divinities. His brow furrowed.

He lifted up his right hand, and the puppy immediately jumped onto his palm. It seemed to be shivering as if it were cold, and looked frightened. It looked up at Meng Hao with adulation, then lowered its head and licked his palm with its tiny tongue.

At the same time, the seven people stepped forward almost at exactly the same time, disappearing into the first spell matrix.

Meng Hao’s eyes flashed. He didn’t really know much about this place, so he didn’t want to act rashly. After looking around for a moment, he realized that the spiritual energy here was quite thick, much more so than in the outside world. It was almost as thick as the spiritual energy in the valley where he had reached Foundation Establishment.

There were no mountains or seas visible, just emptiness. There were only the nine spell matrixes and the dark green sacrificial altar.

Meng Hao thought back to what the archaic voice had said. “My hopes of acquiring the Legacy all rest on this dog?” He looked down for a moment at the puppy in his palm. Then he looked back up, and without any hesitation, walked forward into the first matrix. When he did, the world dissolved around him, then reformed into a world filled with the Immortal mountains and buildings.

In this world, everything was still and quiet. Looking around, he saw that Immortal mountains stretched out like a forest in every direction, covered

with various buildings. This was not a place of mortals, but somewhere to be inhabited by Immortals. The spiritual energy of heaven and earth was very dense. In fact, it seemed about ten times as thick as that outside. It was so thick that it formed a thin fog which was visible everywhere.

“Where am I...?” said Meng Hao, looking around in shock. He gazed about with his Spiritual Sense, then took a deep breath and began to absorb the spiritual energy. It poured into him, racing into his Cultivation base, and then his golden Dao Pillar. Some of it leaked back out from the crack in the Dao Pillar.

“Such thick spiritual energy. If my Dao Pillar didn’t leak spiritual energy, then practicing Cultivation in here for one day would be like practicing for a month in the outside world.” His spirits were roused at this thought. Suddenly, he noticed that the puppy in his palm looked very happy. It appeared to be absorbing the spiritual energy, too. As it did, it’s body was gradually growing bigger. Fluffy fur was beginning to appear on its skin, making it look very cute.

Meng Hao watched on for a while, lost in thought.

“This dog will grow up with me. But from the look of its breathing technique, it will do so with the same speed as me. Could it be... that because of absorbing my heart’s blood, it has the same level of latent talent as me?” His eyes flashed, and he began to move forward. At his side ran the little puppy, which was now about two finger lengths in size. By straining to its limit, it was just barely able to keep up.

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If you’re interested in the roles of dogs in Chinese mythology, you can check out this article.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dog\\_in\\_Chinese\\_mythology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dog_in_Chinese_mythology)

Song Jia’s name in Chinese is 宋佳 (sòng jiā) – Song is a family name. Jia means “excellent”

Li Daoyi’s name in Chinese is 李道一 (lǐ dào yī) – Li is a common family name. Dao is the same character as in The Dao, and means “way” or

“path.” Yi means “one”

# Chapter 122: Reaching an Agreement

Time slipped by. Soon, three days had passed. Meng Hao frowned. He found that no matter how far or where he flew, this place seemed to have no end. It apparently had no borders. Furthermore, as time passed, there seemed to be less and less spiritual energy.

“How do I break through the first spell matrix....?” His brow furrowed, Meng Hao sat down cross-legged on a mountain peak. His eyes flashed as he looked around.

Meanwhile, outside the Legacy zone, the Cultivators surrounding the seven altars throughout the Southern Domain were all watching the scene on the blood screens. They could clearly see that seven of the blurry figures, upon entering the first matrix, immediately sat down cross-legged and began to meditate. However, the eighth and last person to enter starting flying around in seemingly random directions. A long time passed before he sat down and began to meditate.

“What Sect is that last person from? Doesn’t he understand how the first matrix works? Oh I know. He must be a rogue Cultivator. He somehow accidentally opened the Eighth Blood Immortal altar and started the tournament!”

“The first matrix is very simple. It’s a trial of latent talent. Basically, the first matrix will cause the Blood Divinity to grow. The Cultivators must snatch up as much spiritual energy as possible. That’s the key to breaking through the rest of the matrixes.” Conversations like this broke out among the Cultivators, who discussed things in hushed tones. Within the Legacy zone, Meng Hao lifted his head.

“This is weird. The spiritual energy in this place seems to be divided into eight... Including me, eight people entered.” Meng Hao’s eyes gleamed. He took in a deep breath and began to absorb as much spiritual energy as possible.

Although he didn’t quite know how to break through the first matrix, he was beginning to form a guess. The spiritual energy quickly began to



disappear. Meng Hao closed his eyes, and five days passed.

On the fifth day, he continued to suck in as much spiritual energy as he could. His golden Dao Pillar gleamed brightly. In fact, it seemed as if the beginnings of a second Dao Pillar were forming.

As for the puppy, during these five days it had also been absorbing energy, much like Meng Hao. Its body was larger now. It was about the size of Meng Hao's hand. Soon, all of the spiritual energy in the place was completely gone. A roaring sound filled the air, and the surrounding Immortal mountains and buildings began to collapse, crumbling down to form a large platform. Meng Hao opened his eyes to find himself sitting cross-legged on the platform.

Around him, the seven other people opened their eyes. Their respective Blood Divinities had all experienced changes. They were larger and seemingly more intelligent.

As for the blood-colored sprite, its size had not changed, but it had begun to grow tentacles, which writhed about slowly, giving it a very bizarre appearance.

Meng Hao's puppy had experienced the least change of all. It was the size of a hand, and was covered with fluffy fur. It appeared to be very frightened of the other Blood Divinities; it shrank up against Meng Hao, trembling, rubbing its head against his leg and licking his robe. Its large, glistening eyes looked extremely cute.

A glowing door existed on this platform, emitting a slight suction force. Obviously, this was the exit of the Legacy zone. The seven people surrounding Meng Hao stood up one by one. Obviously having no intention of leaving, they transformed into prismatic beams as they and their Blood Divinities shot on toward the second matrix.

Meng Hao was silent. He could sense that most of the seven other peoples' Blood Divinities were emitting Qi of the seventh or eighth level of Qi Condensation. The Blood Dragon and Blood Phoenix, as well as the person-shaped Blood Divinity, were all at the ninth level. His puppy was the only one that was at the third or fourth level.

“My lack of understanding about this place has put me in a bad position....” Meng Hao’s brow furrowed, and his eyes flickered. “But my advantage is that I am the only one who can leave the Legacy zone. If they leave, then countless others would try to enter. Therefore, they have no option of leaving.” Meng Hao was silent for the space of a few breaths. Then he stood up. He didn’t fly toward the second matrix, but instead vanished into the glowing door.

When he emerged, he was in the mouth of the gigantic stone face in the lake of blood. As soon as he flew out, he found that, as he suspected, his Cultivation base was indeed fully recovered. The suppressive force from before now had no effect on him.

“The Blood Divinity didn’t come out with me... It seems that it can only appear within the Legacy zone.” Meng Hao looked back at the altar within the lake of blood, and suddenly frowned. He saw the glowing blood screen, as well as everything that was going on inside the Legacy zone.

“So, outsiders can see what’s happening....” His calm gaze flashed over the screen, and he could see seven blurry figures within the second matrix. As he looked closer, he calmed down a bit.

The images on the screen did not reveal anything about where he was; furthermore, the doorway which had led him back to the volcano was still there.

His eyes shining, he flew into the air. In the space of a few breaths, he had arrived at where Chu Yuyan was concocting the pills.

She sat there cross-legged, her face pale. As Meng Hao approached, she lifted her head and saw him flying through the air toward her. A complex expression filled her face.

“How many more days do you need before you can finish concocting the fifth pill?” said Meng Hao coolly, landing softly onto the ground. He looked at her with cold eyes.

She was silent for a long moment. Finally, she replied in a soft voice. “I will succeed within half a month.”

“Considering our situation,” said Meng Hao, “there’s no need for us to keep fighting with each other.” He looked around at the mists, which he could now see through easily.

Chu Yuyan was silent for a while. She lowered her head. “I want to get out of here, but I don’t trust you.”

“If you concoct my pill, and help me understand the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament, then I swear by my Cultivation base that I will get you out of here safely.” He looked at her.

“The oaths of Cultivators cannot be trusted,” she replied, looking up at him.

“If you want to get out of here, then you have no choice but to trust me,” said Meng Hao, his voice cool. “My benevolence has a limit. First, you went after my Cultivation base. Second, you tried to trick me regarding the Blood Immortal Legacy. If there is a third, then I will just give up my medicinal pill and simply kill you.”

Chu Yuyan sat there silently, apparently having no words to speak. Meng Hao sat down cross-legged next to her. He didn’t say anything more to try to persuade her. An entire day passed, until finally, she sighed in her heart. She was out of tricks and schemes. All of her attempts to outwit Meng Hao had failed. It was exactly as he had said... if she wanted to get out of this place, she had no choice but to trust him. Furthermore, Chu Yuyan had experienced Meng Hao’s ruthlessness and she could sense the cold killing intent within the words he had spoken.

“The nine matrixes of the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament are all different,” she began quietly. “However, the various Sects have thoroughly researched them throughout the seven past Legacy tournaments. The path you will tread, is one of seizure!

“What must be seized is the spiritual energy of heaven and earth. Not only will it help you to grow your Cultivation base, but in accordance with your latent talent, it will also facilitate the growth of your Blood Divinity.

“The growth of your Blood Divinity is very important in the nine matrixes. Over the years, the Violet Fate Sect has come to the conclusion

that if you can break through the ninth matrix, then the Blood Divinity should be able to achieve a level of power equivalent to an expert halfway to the Spirit Severing stage. It can enter the Blood Immortal Legacy treasure as its owner, and become the Weapon Spirit of the treasure!

“Whoever is the master of the Weapon Spirit will have acquired the Legacy of the Blood Immortal, and will be the first person since ancient times to carry out the treasure. After that, he will be able to release the incomparable power of a half-Spirit Severing stage Blood Divinity! This half-Spirit Severing stage Blood Divinity is in fact a Dao Protector left behind by the Blood Immortal of the Ancient Temple of Doom.

“With the exception of the first matrix, the Blood Immortal’s nine matrixes all have different essences. The various Sects have gathered a variety of details regarding this.

“Through mutual cooperation, it was eventually determined that each spell matrix changes. Over the course of many races, the heart of each one has evolved. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the exact essence of each matrix.

“Whoever is first to understand the essence of any given matrix, will be the first to begin absorbing spiritual energy; furthermore, that person’s Blood Divinity will be the first to begin to grow. The spiritual energy within each matrix is limited. The more you absorb, the less others can absorb.” Chu Yuyan looked up at Meng Hao. “Regarding the details of the essences of the various matrixes of the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament, I scanned over them back in the Sect. However, I don’t remember too much. The main thing I remember is that some of the matrixes are illusions.” Having said this, she closed her eyes.

Meng Hao seemed lost in thought as Chu Yuyan’s words continued to echo in his ears. After analyzing the matter for a while, he turned and shot back toward the Blood Immortal’s sacrificial altar. Looking up at the blood screen, he saw that the seven others were still within the second matrix. He strode forward and entered the giant mouth. His eyes grew blurry, then clear again, and he was standing on the platform he’d arrived at after passing the first matrix.

As soon as he emerged, the hand-sized puppy materialized in front of him. It jumped up and down happily, then ran around him a few times, wagging its tail furiously. It seemed incredibly excited to see Meng Hao. Finally, it came to rest on Meng Hao's feet, laying down on top of them and licking his pant leg, looking up at him with adoring eyes.

Meng Hao's reappearance did not cause much stir in the outside world. Based on his setback in the first matrix, he was now far behind everyone else. He was clearly in eighth place.

He took in a deep breath, then turned into a beam of light as he shot into the second matrix. From the outside, this spell matrix had the appearance of a whirlpool of stars, slowly rotating. However, as soon as he entered it, the stars' positions all seemed to change. The world warped, heaven and earth twisted bizarrely. Then everything became clear. In front of Meng Hao was a vast blood-colored ocean.

The ocean seemed limitless, its color deep crimson. Off in the distance, the sun was setting. The evening wind carried a fishy stench, and caused waves to ripple across the ocean's gleaming surface.

The spiritual energy was thin here, not enough to absorb. It would not become thick enough to do so until the spell matrix was broken through.

Suddenly, the blood-colored puppy ran forward a few paces, then let out a few threatening yips toward the ocean. The sound carried nervousness with it, and a sense of danger. The little puppy's fur stood up on end and quivered.

A rumbling could be heard, and the ocean began to seethe. A booming sound echoed out as an arching, dark green wooden bridge slowly rose up out of the ocean of blood. It dripped blood as it stretched up. Lightning and thunder fell from the sky.

Atop the arching wooden bridge stood a young boy with long hair. His eyes glittered coldly as he stared at Meng Hao with a vicious expression.

"One attack," said the young boy coldly. His eyes shined with killing intent. His voice sounded old and archaic, quite in contrast with his appearance. "If you live, the second bridge shall rise. If you pass three

bridges, then you can break through this matrix.”

# Chapter 123: Converging Sense into the Form

The killing intent was incredibly powerful, seemingly capable of causing the ocean to stir. The bridge dripped with blood, and massive waves rolled out across the ocean.

After he finished speaking, the young boy lifted his hand and formed a fist, which then began to descend toward Meng Hao. The ocean of blood roared as waves surged away from the young boy.

Meng Hao's eyes narrowed. The boy's Cultivation base was at the late Foundation Establishment stage. But Meng Hao also knew that having entered this place, he must fight. He strode forward, followed by the puppy, who continued to let out threatening yips. Wisps of blood floated around its hand-sized body. It and Meng Hao turned into two beams of prismatic light which shot toward the young boy.

Meng Hao slapped his bag of the Cosmos, and instantly, two wooden swords flew out. Next, he spat out the Lightning Flag, which surrounded him with mist. Like arrows loosed from a bow, he and the puppy slammed into the young boy.

An explosion sounded out. Meng Hao coughed up blood, and the wooden swords went spinning out of control. The Lightning Flag's mist began to dissipate. Meng Hao and the puppy both shook as they flew backward, spraying blood from their mouths.

The young boy looked coolly at Meng Hao, then lifted his right hand. Behind him, the sea began to roil, and a second arch bridge appeared. The young boy disappeared. On the second bridge, a young man could be seen.

This young man's appearance was very familiar. He looked just like the boy from the first bridge, except ten years older.

"You can come fight any time you wish," he said, his voice cool. "If my fist doesn't kill you, then you can pass to the third bridge." With this, he closed his eyes and stood there, motionless.

Wiping the blood from his mouth, Meng Hao sat down cross-legged on the first bridge. The attack just now seemed to have been filled with the power of the late Flawless Foundation Establishment stage. Without the protection of the Lightning Flag just now, he surely would have perished.

“No wonder the seven others still haven’t broken through the second matrix in the last day. This Blood Immortal Legacy tournament is no joke. And this is only the second matrix....” After thinking about it for a moment, Meng Hao’s eyes filled with determination.

Taking a deep breath, he consumed a medicinal pill and adjusted his Cultivation base. He also placed a medicinal pill down in front of the puppy, who lapped it up immediately, then settled down in Meng Hao’s lap to recover.

Two days later, Meng Hao’s eyes snapped open. The puppy still lay in his lap, but its injuries seemed to be more than half recovered. It leaped up. Although he hadn’t grown any larger, his Qi was different than before.

It seemed as if he had grown closer to Meng Hao, and more vicious toward the rest of the world. Were it not for the high quality of the Qi Condensation level medicinal pills that Meng Hao had given him, it most likely would have perished from his injuries.

“You’re just like I used to be,” said Meng Hao softly, looking at the puppy. “Simple and ordinary, but thrust into the Cultivation world. You have no choice but to change, no choice but to grow stronger and become cold-blooded. You must learn to kill.”

The puppy gazed up at Meng Hao as if he understood his words. It licked Meng Hao’s robe, ran around him in circles a few times, then lay down at his feet.

Meng Hao’s eyes filled with a resolute look. He slowly stood up and then looked toward the second bridge. He smacked the bag of the Cosmos, and a sword rain began to fly out.

One hundred, two hundred, three hundred... five hundred flying swords circled around him! They formed into the shape of a Flying Rain-Dragon. Power from the vibrating Demonic Core within Meng Hao filled his body.



He waved both hands in front of him, and the wooden swords appeared, forming the Flying Rain-Dragon's long fangs. All of this shot at high speed toward the young man on the second bridge.

The young man's expression did not change. He slowly waved his right hand in a casual fist attack. No waves surged out on the ocean of blood, nor was there any roaring sound; it seemed extremely simplistic in nature. However, much the same as the first young boy's fist, it did not wait for Meng Hao's arrival. The vanguard of Meng Hao's flying swords began to smash to pieces, as if they were colliding with an impenetrable stone wall.

They didn't all shatter, only the ones in the very center of the lead position. An invisible line appeared, smashing through the flying swords toward Meng Hao. Sensing the imminent deadly threat, Meng Hao threw all the power of his Cultivation base into the lightning mist and sent the two wooden swords in front of him to block. Of his own volition, the puppy flew up toward Meng Hao's chest, using his back to form a shield. Meng Hao immediately grabbed him and threw him to the side.

A boom rang out that seemed to last forever. Blood shot from Meng Hao's mouth, and he tumbled backward, spinning like a kite with its string cut. He landed onto the first bridge, coughing up more blood, his face pale. It seemed as if his Dao Pillar would fall to pieces at any moment.

"That attack was many times more horrific than the first attack. And yet, from what I could sense, it only contained the power of the middle Flawless Foundation Establishment stage.... Also, did this dog just jump up to protect me...?" Wiping the blood away, he looked down at the puppy who he had thrown off to the side. It looked up at him worriedly. He rubbed its furry head, then looked back at the young man.

"You somehow managed to pass," said the young man calmly. "However, given your level of power, unless there is some mishap, you will not be able to pass the third bridge." He waved his right hand, and immediately a third bridge appeared behind him.

Along with the appearance of the bridge, he vanished. On the third bridge appeared a middle-aged man. He looked just like the young man

from the second bridge, except ten years older. Based on the emanations from his Cultivation base, Meng Hao could surmise that the man was at the same level as himself: The early Foundation Establishment stage, with one Dao Pillar! What a shock!

“This is strange,” said Meng Hao, his eyes narrowing. “Why would the third bridge have someone with a Cultivation base like this...? It seems like the order should be opposite....”

“To pass this bridge,” said the man coolly, “you must withstand one of my attacks without coughing up any blood. You have three chances. Each attack will consist of one fist strike. If you fail three times, then you will no longer be qualified to acquire the Legacy, and will be interred into the ocean of blood, and your spirit will become part of the altar.”

Meng Hao said nothing. He sat down cross-legged on the second bridge and took out some medicinal pills. He also gave several to the puppy. Watching the puppy consumed the pills, Meng Hao thought back to how it had leaped to protect him, and a warm feeling filled his heart.

After three days, Meng Hao had recovered quite a bit. The puppy once again opened its eyes, seemingly quite energetic.

Staring at the man on the third bridge, Meng Hao’s eyes filled with thought. In his mind, he reviewed his battles with the young boy from the first bridge and the young man from the second bridge, trying to piece together some clues about what was going on.

Time trickled by until another day had passed. Meng Hao’s heart stirred, and he slowly raised his head. He had thought of a possible solution.

“When the boy attacked, it was with the power of the late Foundation Establishment stage, and it caused the ocean of blood to seethe. That was because the power of the attack emanated outward. As for the young man, even though he was only of the middle Foundation Establishment stage, the power of the attack did not emanate outward. And of my five hundred flying swords, only about twenty were destroyed. It forced me to directly face the fist, head on.

“In these two battles, the Cultivation bases were not the same. Clearly,

the most important thing is the technique with which the Cultivation base is utilized!" Meng Hao's eyes shone with understanding. He was no idiot; he now clearly understood the answer to the problem.

"So, this man's Cultivation base is the same as mine. But, what power will he put into play...?" Meng Hao looked at him as he slowly stood up. His eyes gleamed with a strange light. At this moment, he didn't really care about the Legacy of the Blood Immortal. He had suddenly realized that within the nine matrixes.... there were invisible Legacies just about everywhere!

He did not attack immediately. Instead, he stood on the second bridge and experimented a bit. He slowly sent power emanating from this Cultivation base, then attempted to control how the power dissipated. It was very difficult, but Meng Hao was stubborn. That was a fundamental characteristic of his personality. He ignored the passage of time, and soon seven days were gone. He lifted his head. He hadn't achieved complete control, yet, only about thirty percent or so.

"I can't keep delaying. I need to check to see if my idea was correct." His eyes gleaming brightly, he walked toward the old man.

Boom!

After the space of about ten breaths, Meng Hao tumbled backward, blood spraying from his mouth and a splitting pain filling his head. He landed back on the second bridge, his body quivering, supporting himself with one hand on the greenish wood. He coughed out another mouthful of blood. Next to him, the puppy quivered. One of its legs was broken, and its Qi was very weak. Meng Hao looked up slowly at the old man on the third bridge.

"First try. Failure."

He took a deep breath and sat down cross-legged. He fed some medicinal pills to the puppy to help heal it. After all, it was just as hurt as he was. The puppy's appearance had changed. Its fur did not look very healthy, and its eyes were dim, but its life force was powerful. Every time it recovered, it emanated more killing intent.

“That man is only at the early Foundation Establishment stage. However, his attack leaked almost no power whatsoever, plus it was filled with a very peculiar feeling.... It seemed as if the fist was not really a fist.... However, I could also tell my seven days of work paid off. I’m on the right track!” He lifted his hand and pushed down between his eyebrows, dissipating some of the pain which wracked his body.

He got to his feet and continued to attempt to exercise control over his power seepage from his Cultivation base. Seven more days passed, and Meng Hao felt that he had about fifty percent control. Although his Cultivation base had not grown, in terms of fighting strength, he had advanced by leaps and bounds.

Meng Hao looked up, his eyes glittering brightly. He and the puppy shot forward, man and dog together, charging the figure on the bridge.

Boom!

Again, it took the space of ten breaths. Meng Hao flopped backward, spinning over and over, blood showering from his mouth to stain his clothes. However, his eyes were bright.

As for the puppy, it seemed to be changing as Meng Hao gained enlightenment. Its injuries were not as severe this time. It let out a fierce little howl.

“Spiritual Sense! He’s not just coalescing his Cultivation base, he’s adding Spiritual Sense into the fist attack! That makes the fist... capable of striking directly to the Cultivation base!”

Meng Hao took in a deep breath as the glow of enlightenment filled his eyes. He suddenly understood that although the Cultivation base is of critical importance to a Cultivator, when it came to spiritual power and the techniques with which to employ it, control is the key to true might in battle!

He sat down cross-legged and closed his eyes. This time, he spent about two weeks before he opened his eyes. He had been stuck in this matrix for around a month. He had no idea how things were going for the seven others, but as far as Meng Hao was concerned, even if he was in last place,

he had acquired something incredible.

He slowly stood up, flying forward. The puppy seemed to have been reborn in accord to Meng Hao's enlightenment. It followed Meng Hao, charging directly toward the man on the bridge.

Boom!

Meng Hao retreated backward eight steps. He slowly lifted his head. His Qi and blood roiled, but there was no trace of blood in his throat. The man pulled back his fist. Meng Hao bowed to him with clasped hands.

"You are enlightened regarding the concept of converging sense into the form; you have passed the second matrix!" The old man nodded and flicked his sleeve. The world around began to crumble.

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# Chapter 124: Breaking Through the Matrix

As the world crumbled around him, Meng Hao felt a huge wave of spiritual energy sweeping out, encircling him and the puppy. He breathed in deeply, immediately circulating his Cultivation base and absorbing large quantities of spiritual energy.

The spiritual energy was thick here, even more so than in the first matrix. He had the feeling that if he could practice Cultivation in here for a while, he wouldn't need any medicinal pills whatsoever to form his second Dao Pillar.

Unfortunately, after absorbing the spiritual energy, some of it seeped out through the crack in the Dao Pillar. If it didn't, Meng Hao was certain that given a relatively short period of time, he would be able to condense the second Dao Pillar.

"The Perfect Foundation...." A gleam of anticipation appeared in his eyes.

He wasn't the only excited one. The puppy began to absorb spiritual energy at a rapid rate. Its body slowly began to change. Its Qi grew stronger, although some of it dissipated out, just like Meng Hao's.

It didn't last very long, unfortunately. After only three days, the spiritual energy in the area was sucked dry. Meng Hao opened his eyes. He sat cross-legged on a huge platform. Joining him on the platform in various directions were four other figures, all sitting cross-legged in meditation.

At almost the same time that Meng Hao opened his eyes, they did too. All of their respective Blood Divinities were changed in some way.

Although, in terms of change, Meng Hao's puppy had experienced the most of all. It was now about half the length of an arm. It had blood-red fur, sharp teeth, and glittering claws. It now had a somewhat fierce appearance.

Its eyes were not clear as they had been; a reddish glow was visible within them, as if it had transformed after the recent life-and-death situations it had experienced. Anyone who looked at it now would be able

to sense its fierceness.

This was especially true of its Qi. It now carried the strength of Foundation Establishment!

For Cultivators, reaching Foundation Establishment is very difficult; but for the Blood Divinities, the Legacy zone was a special area. Here, they could experience rapid growth. After all, they were not Cultivators, but Legacy Blood Divinities.

“These Blood Divinities increase their level so quickly. Maybe it’s because of some special ability they have. Or maybe they existed in the past, then died, and these are their spirits.” Meng Hao was lost in thought for a while. Some time passed, and then he looked over his shoulder at the second matrix. There was no one inside. Up ahead in the third matrix, were three indistinct figures. Further ahead in the fourth matrix, there was one.

Those three people had obviously left the second matrix much earlier. Apparently, instead of taking a lot of time to absorb spiritual energy, they preferred to charge ahead to gain some distance.

Meng Hao breathed in deeply, and then slowly stood up. His eyes gleamed as he strode forward into the third matrix.

Meanwhile in the world outside of the Blood Immortal Legacy zone, nearly ten thousand Cultivators had gathered around to watch the scenes playing out on the blood screen. The sound of conversations began to rise.

“The news is already spreading. The identities of most of the people inside have already been discovered. Who would have imagined that the person in first place is Li Daoyi, Dao Child of the Li Clan!? It’s hard to say if he’ll be able to acquire the Legacy in the end, but he certainly seems to have the best chance.”

“How detestable! The great Clans and Sects are always lording it over the Legacies. They never give anyone else the slightest chance! If only I were the person who had discovered the location of the Blood Immortal’s eighth sacrificial altar. The very least benefit is that there wouldn’t have been anyone to fight over it with.”

“What’s the use of even thinking about it? All the people who enter the matrixes are Chosen from various Sects and Clans. Even if you didn’t have to fight over it, compared to those Chosen, you’re too weak. Look, that guy is obviously the one who opened the Blood Immortal’s eighth sacrificial altar, and yet see how much time he took in the second matrix. Based on that, there’s no way he can pass through the third.”

Most of the discussions that filled the areas surrounding the Southern Domain’s Blood Immortal Legacy zones went something like this.

Within the fourth matrix was Li Daoyi, looking dashing and handsome in his long, yellow robe. He peered calmly off into the distance. A desert stretched out as far as the eye could see.

“Long ago, the Patriarch left behind a decree and a prophecy. The Blood Immortal would emerge from the Li Clan. This Legacy belongs to me. As for the others... well, their lives will be under my control within the sixth matrix.” His expression calm, he stepped forward.

Back in the third matrix, Meng Hao’s brow furrowed slightly. Next to him, the dog let out a threatening howl as it stared at a massive tree which had appeared up ahead.

Underneath the tree was a Go board, upon which were a myriad of Go pieces, spread out like the stars in the sky. Black was clearly in the losing position. There was one white piece sitting next to the board, as if it were waiting for someone to pick it up and play it.

Surrounding the Go board were several hundred trees, each one about as tall as a person. The whole place seemed deserted. The presence of the huge tree made it seem even more bizarre.

The archaic voice filled the air: “In the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament, the character ‘blood’ emphasizes killing. If you desire to acquire the Legacy but have insufficient killing intent, then it will be very difficult for you. This matrix emphasises killing. However, the one who kills must have a cold heart and a calm spirit. Place the white Go piece onto the board, and you will win this game of death!

“You have one chance. If you wish to forfeit, you must sacrifice one



hundred years of longevity, and lose your chance at acquiring the Legacy.” The instant the voice finished speaking, one of the trees up ahead suddenly exploded into pieces. From within emerged a phantom emanating the Qi of Foundation Establishment, the same as Meng Hao’s Cultivation base.

The phantom was blurry, except for a pair of blood-red eyes which emanated a fierce killing aura. It immediately raced toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao’s eyes glittered sharply. Next to him, the puppy let out sharp yapping sounds as it charged forward with him.

A booming sounded out. A moment later, Meng Hao watched as the Foundation Establishment phantom dispersed into strands of spiritual energy, which then shot toward Meng Hao. As this happened, popping sounds rang out as three more trees began to split apart.

After enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, blood seeped out of the corners of Meng Hao’s mouth. The puppy was injured and bleeding, although its appearance was as fierce as ever as it looked around. Five Foundation Establishment phantoms had appeared.

More time passed. It was hard to tell exactly how long. Meng Hao coughed up some more blood. He had fought his way through the trees to a position not quite two thousand meters away from the Go board and the large tree. His eyes were bloodshot as he raced through the world of the third matrix. He was currently surrounded by twelve Foundation Establishment phantoms, each of whom emitted killing intent which billowed into the sky.

The puppy yipped next to him, and then a blood-colored beam flashed. Its sharp teeth crunched into the neck of one of the Foundation Establishment phantoms. Together, the two of them had slaughtered their way forward, at the same time trying to absorb as much spiritual energy as possible from this place. By now, the puppy had already reached the middle Foundation Establishment stage, and was continuing to grow. Its fierceness was now even more apparent.

Several hours later, Meng Hao staggered along, coughing up some blood.

Up ahead, a Foundation Establishment phantom was on its last legs, panting. It seemed to use all the power it could possibly muster to dash forward. As it did, Meng Hao's killing intent flared. His right hand formed into a fist and, ignoring the incoming sword aura, punched his fist toward the phantom's chest. His fist suddenly opened, and a Wind Blade shot out with a boom. Meng Hao coughed up more blood. At the same time, the Foundation Establishment phantom trembled and then exploded.

Not too far away, the puppy was an unstoppable blood-red glow. It used its sharp claws and teeth to rip the Foundation Establishment phantoms to shreds. Then, it rapidly absorbed their spiritual energy and returned to Meng Hao's side.

Its body was covered with wounds which oozed blood. Its Qi was weak, but its ferocity was as strong as ever; it seemed to have been baptized in blood.

Meng Hao swallowed some medicinal pills, and then tossed some down to the puppy. His clothes were torn and ripped, but his eyes gleamed. Lifting his head, he saw that the distance between himself and the tree was now less than two thousand meters. It was at this time that a roaring sound filled the air. Twenty Foundation Establishment phantoms appeared, racing at full speed toward Meng Hao.

He took in a deep breath, fatigue covering his face, but his eyes flashing. He lifted his hand and the lightning mist appeared. Electricity surrounded him as he charged forward to battle the phantoms.

Wounds led to wounds, battles led to battles. Four hours passed. Meng Hao's face was white. He was now eight hundred meters from the large tree. He raced backward with the puppy, away from the Foundation Establishment phantoms. One by one, they stopped, transforming back into trees.

Some distance away from them, Meng Hao sat down cross-legged and ate some medicinal pills to heal his wounds. Next to him, the puppy consumed quite a few as well, and began to recover quickly. Four days passed before Meng Hao suddenly opened his eyes. The puppy looked

even more ferocious as the two of them once again charged into battle.

This time, they fought to within five hundred meters of the tree, until they could proceed no further, whereupon they fell back.

In the following days, Meng Hao and the puppy continued to fight and rest. Meng Hao's eyes grew more and more ruthless, his attacks, more and more decisive. At this point, he had roughly seventy percent control over his Cultivation base. Furthermore, regardless of which technique he used, he imbued it with Spiritual Sense.

As for the puppy, its body was now as long as an arm. It appeared even more ferocious; its claws were fully grown out, as had its sharp teeth. It appeared as if it could rip anything to shreds. Its eyes glowed bright red, making it look even more savage.

Five hundred meters, three hundred meters, one hundred meters.... Meng Hao had been stuck in this matrix for more than a month. Soon, he reached a position twenty meters away from the large tree. The puppy let loose a howl and latched onto the corner of Meng Hao's robe with its teeth, dragging him forward. Meng Hao didn't mind at all. He let the puppy drag him, and the two of them shot forward, blasting through the defending Foundation Establishment phantoms, passing over the twenty meter mark.

As they approached the tree, the puppy loosened its mouth, then spun and charged back into the Foundation Establishment phantoms. Meng Hao didn't hesitate; he snatched up the white Go piece. His gaze swept across the Go board, and then he placed the piece down.

As soon as it touched the board, this entire world grew quiet. Everything in front of Meng Hao looked like a mirror that was shattering. Boundless spiritual energy surged into him.

He knew that he had passed through the third matrix.

When this happened, the Cultivators outside of the seven Blood Immortal Legacy zones around the Southern Domain flew into an uproar:

"The Li Clan Dao Child, Li Daoyi, broke through the fourth matrix. It

took him a month...”

“That’s Wang Wu’de of the Blood Demon Sect. He’s right behind Li Daoyi. He was the second to enter the fourth matrix. Everyone else is stuck in the third matrix. I wonder who will be the third person to....”

“It’s got to be Wang Lihai. After all, he’s a Dao Child. The Wang Clan really isn’t holding anything back. They sent a Dao Child... ahh??”

“Three people just came out at the same time! That’s Wang Lihai and Song Jia, and that other person is... wow, it’s him?!”

# Chapter 125: This Matrix Was Made for It

Boundless spiritual energy poured into Meng Hao's Cultivation base. Deep inside, his Second Dao pillar slowly grew more and more solid.

"If the spiritual energy weren't constantly leaking, I could form the second Dao Pillar at any time!" Meng Hao sighed.

A few days later, he opened his glittering eyes. He had no idea how much of a stir he had caused in the outside world by stepping out of the third matrix at the same time as Wang Lihai and Song Jia.

Some people were speculating that Meng Hao must be a Chosen from some Sect. However, there was no way to confirm this, which just fuelled the guesses and rumors. Meng Hao's performance made him somewhat of a dark horse.

Amidst the various discussions, the common conclusion reached was that Wang Lihai was having some problems. Were it not for that, he would have emerged much earlier.

Meng Hao looked at the puppy in front of him, and a warm look appeared on his face.

The puppy was now much bigger. It was about half the size of a person, like a baby ox. Thick, elegant, red fur covered its sturdy body, which seemed to brim with intense power. When it opened its mouth, its teeth seemed as sharp as swords. Its claws were as thick as human fists, and seemed sharp enough to rip open heaven and earth. Its eyes were crimson red, making it appear ferocious to the extreme. As it stood there, it would cause anyone to be shocked.

In fact, it was no longer a puppy. It had become a full grown dog, a Blood Mastiff!

It stood there, looking about coldly, as if the place where it stood was about to be encroached upon by others. If anyone attempted to approach Meng Hao, it would rip that person into pieces.

Meng Hao looked at the mastiff, and his expression grew warmer. In just

a few months, it had grown from a tiny, unassuming puppy, into this current state. As they had fought their way through the various matrixes, they had formed a strange friendship.

They were wounded together, they charged forth together. They experienced life and death struggles, and baptism by blood, all together.

As if it could sense Meng Hao's gaze, the mastiff turned its head and looked at him. The ferociousness instantly disappeared, replaced with happiness. Wagging its tail vigorously, it ran over to Meng Hao, stuck out its tongue, and licked his hand, looking at him with puppy dog eyes.

A smile broke out on Meng Hao's face. When he ruffled the fur on the mastiff's head, and saw the look of pleasure on its face, he couldn't help but laugh.

Raising his head, Meng Hao looked back at the third matrix. There were still three people stuck inside. Ahead in the fourth matrix were three indistinct figures. Further ahead in the fifth, there was only one.

Meng Hao stood up, patting the mastiff and then striding, not into the fourth matrix, but into the glowing exit door. When he emerged, he was back in the volcano.

Months had passed during which Meng Hao hadn't thought too much about the matter of his pill. He transformed into a colorful beam of light which shot toward Chu Yuyan. She sat there, eyes closed, meditating. As soon as Meng Hao arrived, she opened her eyes. Their gazes met, and then Chu Yuyan looked to the side. She lifted her hand up, and a medicinal pill flew out. Meng Hao snatched it. It was none other than the fifth minor pill.

His face was calm as he put the pill into his bag of the cosmos, then turned and disappeared. Not much time passed before he returned. When he did, he flicked his sleeve, and seven pills shot forward and landed in front of Chu Yuyan.

"These seven pills concocted together are the Seven Thunders Pill," he said. He threw her a jade slip, which described the concoction formula. The exact amount of time needed to concoct the pill, however, had been

erased by Meng Hao.

“Who is in first place?” asked Chu Yuyan, looking at Meng Hao and temporarily ignoring the Seven Thunders Pill formula.

“I can’t see what he looks like, but his Blood Divinity is a dragon.”

She thought for a moment. “He must be from the Li Clan.” After this, she looked down and began to study the jade slip.

Meng Hao was silent for a while. Then, he slowly said, “You have one chance. If you fail, I don’t have enough ingredients for a second try.” He looked at her for a moment, then turned around and became a beam of light which disappeared into the distance. His eyes sparkled. “When she finishes the pill, she will no doubt consider consuming it. However, the turtle shell makes it quite clear that it takes about three months to use the seven minor pills to concoct the final pill.... She doesn’t know this, so I will be sure to be there at the key moment.” As he thought about this, he flew up to the glowing shield above the mists. He examined it carefully again, then shot back down to the Blood Immortal’s sacrificial altar. Without hesitation, he re-entered the Legacy zone.

Back on the wide platform, the mastiff instantly reappeared. It now exuded the powerful pressure of the late Foundation Establishment stage, which didn’t affect Meng Hao in the least bit. Meng Hao took a deep breath. Then his body flashed as he and the mastiff flew into the fourth matrix.

A vast, endless desert stretched out as far as the eye could see. Even though no scorching sun was visible in the sky, suffocating heat rippled throughout this world. It was as if the entire place were a giant steamer basket, intent on cooking everything inside until it withered up.

Meng Hao examined his surroundings, his heart filled with vigilance. After having passed through the second and third matrixes, he now understood a bit more how they worked. However, this desert was completely silent; not a shadow of a moving thing could be seen. No archaic voice echoed out to an explanation.

Meng Hao sat there contemplatively for a while, then lifted his foot and

took a step forward. The mastiff walked quickly by his side. Man and dog, together they walked forward into the desolate and uninhabited desert. After he had taken a few steps, Meng Hao looked back at the path they had trod, and noticed that the footprints he had left behind had turned black.

Then, a black Qi rose up from the footprints; the surrounding sand began to emanate a buzzing sound. From the speed with which the Qi began to dissipate, it seemed as if it didn't dare to even approach Meng Hao.

Suddenly, the black Qi began to transform into a flower of three petals, which had the appearance of a demonic face. Then it disappeared.

Seeing this, Meng Hao eye's narrowed. Suddenly, the mastiff began to howl. Looking off into the distance, Meng Hao saw a massive group of brown scorpions scurrying toward him. They seemed to be without number as they shot toward him from off in the horizon.

The mastiff flew up into the air, roaring. Above, the sky started to grow dark, as if evening were falling. But it was not evening, and if you looked closely at what above appeared to be dark storm clouds, you would see they were in fact clouds of winged scorpions, screaming through the air toward Meng Hao. In an instant, they had surrounded him, blotting out the sky completely.

"Poison...." thought Meng Hao. Looking back at his footprints he saw that the sand there was completely black. He turned and flicked his sleeve, comforting the mastiff, then walked toward the incoming scorpions.

The mastiff let out a threatening growl, following Meng Hao and eyeing the scorpions coldly.

But, as soon as Meng Hao neared them, they immediately fell back, emitting shrill, hissing shrieks. It seemed as if they didn't dare to even come close to Meng Hao.

He didn't slow down even the least bit. He walked forward, sending the scorpions into frenzied retreat. Sometimes a scorpion wasn't fast enough. Immediately, a red tendril would emerge from the top of Meng Hao's head



and stab into its body, whereupon it would melt into a pool of black blood that sank into the sand.

It wasn't just the land-based scorpions that acted in this way; the flying scorpions also gave him wide berth, not daring to get too close. Along with the mastiff, Meng Hao walked straight through all of them.

He walked across the land, surrounded by darkness. It seemed as if the poison in this place had no way to resist the power of the poison within Meng Hao's body, and had no choice but to disperse in front of him.

Within Meng Hao's two eyes appeared flickering flowers in the shape of laughing-crying demonic faces. Behind him gradually appeared... a three-colored Resurrection Lily!

The three-colors of the Resurrection Lily interlocked with each other and glimmered, making it impossible for any other poisons to exist nearby it.

Meng Hao's face was expressionless. After he had walked for a day, an endless sea of vipers appeared in front of him. An acrid wind washed across his face. However, he just continued to walk forward, as if he hadn't even noticed. When he approached, the vipers instantly began to twist and writhe, then let out anxious hissing noises as they slithered away. Some of them even allowed him to step directly onto their bodies. They would quiver, but offer no resistance. After he passed by they seemed to recover a bit.

It appeared as if within Meng Hao's body existed the power of the sovereign of poisons. Facing this power, any other poison or poisonous creature had no choice but to lower its head in submission.

In contrast to Meng Hao, Wang Lihai proceeded through the desert with a frown, frequently consuming poison dispelling pills. In the seven previous Legacy tournaments of the past tens of thousands of years, this poison desert had appeared twice. The great Clans and Sects had taken special note of it. It didn't appear every single time, because the spell matrixes often changed. But when it did, one needed to be completely prepared.

Even still, poison repelling pills were never completely effective, or were

minimally effective against certain poisons. For example, at the moment Wang Lihai faced up against a thick poison mist.

Looking at it, his brow furrowed anxiously. From the first time he had stepped foot outside of the Wang Clan until now, he had never seen anything like it. He continued to wonder why the Patriarch had insisted that he be the one to come here. Thinking back to the look in the man's eyes, there had to be some reason.

"There's no way that I'll actually die in here, is there?" His eyes flickered with a strange light.

Song Jia was also facing the poison mist in the fourth matrix. She had a beautiful face and an otherworldly countenance. Right now, a frown covered her face, despite the fact that a softly rippling shield surrounded her, protecting her.

The others who were in the fourth matrix were in similar situations. Time passed, and they slowly proceeded. Even the sand beneath their feet was poison, and they knew that if they were not cautious, they would die.

It can be said that without proper preparations, the fourth matrix is without a doubt a matrix of death. In fact, even having prepared, poison repelling items became less and less effective the further into the desert you went. You would have to rely on your Cultivation base, and your luck.

But Meng Hao was different.... He walked forward through the poison mist, his face expressionless. He drew in a breath, but the poison mist did nothing but float away from him. In fact, the air was completely clear for a space of ten meters in all directions.

The mastiff followed Meng Hao eagerly. It seemed to be quite happy to take such a leisurely stroll through this matrix. It pounced forward and stepped down on a poison creature, batting it back and forth between its paws. It seemed to be having a lot of fun. It looked at Meng Hao, then bounded after him.

Seven days passed, and Meng Hao was already far, far ahead of any of the others. In the depths of the desert, he slowly stopped walking, looking forward in amazement. Something very strange had just appeared in front

of him.

There, in an empty stretch of desert, was a place with no sand. It contained only a single flower.

This flower... had four petals that were composed of four colors. Its leaves were emerald green, and its petals had the appearance of a demonic face that was both crying and laughing at the same time.... This was none other than a four-colored Resurrection Lily.

A Resurrection Lily growing here, in this desert, in this spell matrix.

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# Chapter 126: Out of Nowhere

On the opposite shore is a flower; it blooms with seven colors; its name means Immortal Ascension. (TL Note: See footnote below)

Every Resurrection Lily in the world feeds on the life of someone powerful, is watered with that person's blood. As a result of the countless condensations of mystical will, it lives, going from one color to another, seven in all.

Meng Hao had been infected with a three-colored Resurrection Lily. In front of him, was a four-colored Resurrection Lily. Complicated feelings arose inside him. He could clearly sense that this flower had once been just like him, a Cultivator.

As soon as he caught sight of the Resurrection Lily, a three-colored mist emerged from the top of his head and congealed into a beautiful three-colored Resurrection Lily. It swayed back and forth. The petals formed a demonic face that seemed to wish to cry, but didn't. It was as if recalling its life made it wish to weep, but at the same time, it was unwilling to.

Gradually, the four-colored Resurrection Lily in front of Meng Hao also began to sway back and forth. Eventually, Meng Hao realized that standing on top of the flower was the dim image of a man in a white robe. He stood there silently, and though his figure was indistinct, he was looking directly at Meng Hao.

They seemed to be gazing at each other through time, from opposite shores of a river. A long moment passed, and finally the white-robed man sighed. He lifted his right hand and waved it; next to him in the sand appeared a glowing door.

People who share the same fate have no need to make things difficult for each other. The glowing door led out; stepping through it meant leaving the fourth matrix.

As soon as the glowing door appeared, the white-robed man vanished. The only thing left behind was the Resurrection Lily, swaying back and forth slowly. It looked like it wanted to cry, and yet at the same time, didn't

want to.

Meng Hao was silent for a moment. Then, he clasped his hands and bowed deeply. With that, he lifted his head and walked through the glowing door, his mood mixed and complex. The world around him fragmented, then came back together. He was on a large platform filled with dense spiritual energy that immediately enveloped him and the mastiff.

Ahead of him was the fifth matrix and Li Daoyi. Everyone else was stuck behind Meng Hao in the fourth matrix. To emerge from the fourth matrix in fewer than ten days was something that had never happened during all the Legacy tournaments since ancient times. Meng Hao had charged through the fourth matrix faster than anyone else in history!

Outside in the Southern Domain, Meng Hao's appearance caused an uproar. Everyone watching the blood screens outside the Blood Immortal Legacy zones stared at Meng Hao's indistinct figure, shocked. They simply couldn't believe it.

"Seven days! This person charged through the fourth matrix in seven days! How did he do it? In the history of the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament, something like this has never happened!"

"Based on his performance in the fourth matrix, he's now superseded all those others! Now, the only person in front of him is Li Daoyi! If he can do as well in the fifth matrix, then even if he doesn't acquire the Legacy of the Blood Immortal, he'll still be famous in all the Southern Domain."

"Where is this guy from? I can't believe that he has no history.... Unless... unless he's from the Black Sieve Sect. After all, when the seven previous Blood Immortal Legacy zones opened, the Black Sieve Sect never showed up!"

Amidst the continuous uproar, Eccentric Song stared at the indistinct form of Meng Hao as he sat meditating. It wasn't just him. Wu Dingqiu of the Violet Fate Sect, Zhao Shanling from the Golden Frost Sect and even Zhou Yanyun of the Solitary Sword sect as well as Chen Fan, were all paying very close attention to Meng Hao.

Of course, none of them had any way to know that each and every one of them had met him before.

Wang Tengfei glanced at Meng Hao, his hands clasped together tightly. He had no way to recognize him either, and in any case, was paying more attention to his brother Wang Lihai.

In the Li Clan, frowns had appeared on the faces of the two old Nascent Soul Cultivators. They were now feeling a bit threatened by Meng Hao.

While the outside world buzzed about Meng Hao getting through the fourth matrix in seven days, he sat meditating, absorbing the boundless spiritual energy of heaven and earth as quickly as possible. The outline of his second Dao Pillar was becoming more and more distinct. His mastiff was also absorbing spiritual energy rapidly. Soon it was as large as a person. Standing next to Meng Hao, who was sitting cross-legged, it looked quite fear-inspiring.

It had a thick, luxurious coat of blood-red fur covering his body, and even his face. Visible through the fur covering its head were two blood-red eyes that shone with a cold, blood-thirsty light. Its claws were as sharp as flying swords, and seemed capable of ripping apart heaven and earth. When it opened its mouth, the first thing you saw were long, sharp teeth, seemingly capable of ripping apart any living thing.

Meng Hao continued to meditate for eight days after leaving the fourth matrix. Eventually, the air rippled, and Wang Lihai emerged. When he did, he looked at Meng Hao with surprise. He had assumed that he would be the first person after Li Daoyi to emerge from the fourth matrix. Having passed through the matrix in half a month should have caused quite a stir outside. However... any stir he might have caused was already stolen by Meng Hao.

He looked closely at Meng Hao for a moment, and then sat down cross-legged to meditate. Three more days passed before Song Jia came out. She staggered a bit, blood oozing out of her mouth, before sitting down cross-legged to begin breathing exercises.

Meng Hao opened his eyes. The spiritual energy in this place was

dissipating. He muttered to himself for a moment. The outline of his second Dao Pillar was almost completely formed. If the surrounding spiritual energy remained as thick as it had at the outset, then he would only need half a month to completely solidify the Dao Pillar.

But the spiritual energy was thin now, and would require time to replenish.

“Perfect Foundation....” Again, Meng Hao’s desire for the Perfect Foundation grew.

Suddenly, his mastiff raised its head toward the heavens and let out an astonishing roar. Meng Hao, as well as the others on the platform, instantly looked over.

What they saw was the Mastiff’s Qi growing more and more powerful. Its body suddenly grew another meter longer. Its appearance was now thoroughly frightening. Such growth would be astonishing enough, but there was more. Multiple blood-red bone spurs suddenly grew out of its legs, and its teeth grew so long that it didn’t even have to open its mouth for them to be seen. One look would cause anyone’s heart to thump.

There was a roaring sound as its Cultivation base rose. In an instant, it no longer emitted the Qi of the Foundation Establishment stage, but... the Core Formation stage!

The outside world once again erupted in shock.

“Core Formation!! This guy’s Blood Divinity is the second to reach Core Formation!”

“It seems he is the only person who will be able to give Li Daoyi a run for his money! Who is this guy...?”

Meng Hao looked at his mastiff’s fearsome appearance and shocking Qi, and sighed in his heart. The dog could only exist in this place, and couldn’t be taken out. If it could, then based on the friendship that had developed between the two of them, Meng Hao would feel much safer in the Cultivation world outside.

“And it’s still not done growing....” thought Meng Hao, his eyes

glittering. “The only way to take it outside of this place is to acquire the Legacy of the Blood Immortal.” He reached up to pet the mastiff. Others might think it looked cruel and savage, but in Meng Hao’s eyes it was incredibly cute. As he pet it, it let out a pleased grumbling sound, just like it had when it was small. Then it laid down on its stomach and licked Meng Hao’s hand, looking at him with the same fawning eyes it had when it was young. The only difference now was that its tongue was the size of Meng Hao’s entire hand.

It seemed that it could treat everything in this world with fierce savagery, but as for Meng Hao, no matter what happened, it would view him just as it always had. Meng Hao would pet it, it would lick his hand, and everything would be peaceful.

“Actually, I don’t care much about the Legacy of the Blood Immortal, but I will fight to take this Blood Divinity out with me....” Meng Hao lifted his head, and his eyes sparkled. He slowly stood up. Now that the spiritual energy here was weak, it was a waste of time to stay. He had a total of three months to spend in here, and half a month had already passed. He strode forward, and the mastiff followed. Under the watchful eyes of the outside world, the two of them flew into the fifth matrix.

Up until now, only Li Daoyi had entered the fifth spell matrix. As soon as Meng Hao entered, the archaic voice could be heard.

“This matrix is of the void, the void is of the end, thus the name ‘end the void.’ There are blood runes which form a seal over a myriad spirits; gain enlightenment, and it can be broken. If you break it, you retain it after acquiring the Legacy. Fail to acquire the Legacy, and it shall be erased.

“This matrix is exceedingly difficult, so the Blood Divinity may chose to leave at any time. However, the Legacy competitor must to fight the battle to the end, even if that end be in death.”

As the voice echoed out, a new world materialized in front of Meng Hao. To be specific, it was a mountain. On top of the mountain was an enormous stone stele. Next to the stele was a glowing door that could only be used by the Blood Divinity.



The stone stele was covered with blood-colored magical symbols. The symbols flickered, seemingly containing some type of Dao that required enlightenment to understand.

When Meng Hao appeared in this world, he found himself at the top of the mountain, beneath the stone stele. The mastiff stood next to him, looking around vigilantly.

Meng Hao's eyes were thoughtful as he looked at the magical symbols on the stone stele. Even as he did so, his face twisted in astonishment. Something was happening that hadn't occurred the entire time he had been in the Blood Immortal Legacy zone. He slapped his bag of holding, and a Spring and Autumn tree appeared. He grasped it in his hand.

However, he suddenly had no power to absorb the Spring and Autumn tree. Apparently, within the fifth spell matrix, he was completely cut off from the tree. Meng Hao's expression once again flickered.

Before he could do anything else, his body suddenly trembled, and he coughed up a mouthful of blood. The blood was black, and even before it could reach the ground, it transformed into a three-colored Resurrection Lily. Its face of petals, crying and not crying, looked straight at Meng Hao.

Meng Hao's face went pale, and within his eyes appeared faces made of three-colored flower petals. His body shook even harder, and severe pain flowed throughout him, threatening to send him unconscious. He doubled over as the poison within his body once again flared up.

"I suppressed the poison only half a month ago in the volcano...." he thought, forcing his eyes to stay open. He repeatedly told himself not to pass out; if he lost consciousness in the fifth matrix, he would most certainly die.

Actually, the poison flare-up had nothing to do with the fifth matrix, but the fourth. After seeing the four-colored Resurrection Lily, the poison within his body had been aroused, causing it to flare up.

Meng Hao's body was covered in sweat, and an indescribable pain washed over him like floodwaters, causing him to become like a mortal in all aspects. His face twisted wretchedly, and he gritted his teeth

tenaciously.

The mastiff didn't understand what was happening, but seeing Meng Hao this way caused it to let out a nervous whine. And it was at this moment that suddenly, a multitude of roaring shouts could be heard drifting up from the bottom of the mountain.

Down below, a hoard of figures appeared. It was a group of people dressed in ragged clothing, like barbarians. They were tall, and their eyes were filled with cruelty as they raced up toward the top of the mountain.

Based on their speed, they would reach the top of the mountain within the space of a few breaths. Meng Hao's face was pale, and his body trembled. This flare-up was more intense by far than previous ones. He didn't even have the energy to lift up a hand. He could only look around with his eyes at the massive group of people rushing toward him.

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TL Note: The name of the Resurrection Lily in Chinese contains a reference to a Buddhist concept called Pāramitā, which literally translates as "the other shore"



# Chapter 127: This is My Promise to You

The instant the savage figures appeared, Meng Hao's mastiff let out a howl. It leapt forward, turning into a ferocious blur as it raced in circles around Meng Hao.

Blood flew out so violently it created a foam, and the bodies of barbarians tumbled down the mountain.

Their deaths did not frighten the barbarians behind them; instead, it incited further savagery as they charged forward. The mastiff's ferocity billowed to the heavens as it protected the area around Meng Hao. Any approaching enemy met its attack; it clearly would not allow anyone to harm Meng Hao.

Meng Hao's body shook, but he forced his eyes to remain open. He could hear the mastiff's attacks, and could see the seemingly endless sea of people, but he could do nothing.

Time passed by, and blood flowed down the mountain. The mastiff's frenzy had created a no man's land which surrounded Meng Hao ten meters in each direction. Countless barbarians had died, forming a bloody mountain at its edge.

One day, two days.... the mastiff had no rest whatsoever. The barbarians seemed to never end. They charged relentlessly. On the second day, Core Formation Cultivators appeared in their midst, wearing barbarian suits of armor.

The bloody battle continued within the fifth matrix, with canine howls and miserable human shrieks filling the air. Late in the night of the second day, the mastiff killed the three Core Formation barbarians, although it was wounded in the process. After that, there was quiet. The barbarians retreated. Everything was still.

In a daze, Meng Hao looked at the mastiff. One of its legs was broken, and it looked exhausted. It hadn't rested in two days, and had no medicinal pills to consume. Each fight had been a fight to the death, and it had prevented any of the people from harming Meng Hao. In fact, thanks

to its frenzy, no one had even stepped within ten meters of him.

As of now, it was overcome with fatigue. It lay down next to Meng Hao, panting. It licked his hand as if it wanted him to pet its head.

Everything was still; on the mountain peak, only a dog and a man could be seen. One couldn't move, the other lay prone, ready to stand guard for an eternity.

Meng Hao looked at the mastiff, and a warmth rose up from the bottom of his heart that he had never felt before. It filled his entire body. This creature was just a puppy, a Blood Divinity with little spiritual understanding. And yet... it would not forsake him. Even under these circumstances, it wouldn't leave, but instead fought to defend him.

Considering the accumulated injuries and exhaustion, if it continued to fight in this way, it would die eventually.

But it stayed by Meng Hao's side to protect him. Soon dawn broke, and a clamor from the bottom of the mountain broke the stillness. The air seemed to fill with the Qi of Core Formation, and was followed by the furious shouting of barbarians charging up the mountain.

The mastiff... looked at Meng Hao, then licked his hand. It turned, and with a ferocious howl, charged into battle.

Meng Hao couldn't move. He could only watch the mastiff charge into action. He couldn't even turn his head. The only thing he could see was the half of the world which lay directly in front of him. Even what was down below on the mountain was not visible to him.

Barking and blood-curdling screams filled his ears for the entire day. He didn't know exactly how fierce the fighting was, but he could sense that throughout the entire day, no one could step foot within a ten meter radius of him.

When night fell, everything grew quiet again. Enough time passed for an incense stick to burn before the mastiff finally returned to Meng Hao and lay down next to him. Its back was broken, and it had trouble walking. Another leg was broken, and one of its long, sharp teeth had been snapped

off.

Its Qi was weak, and its fur coat in disarray. Blood dripped off of its body as it lay there licking Meng Hao's hand. It let off a faint whine, seemingly calling to Meng Hao, seemingly recounting to him the days' events.

It seemed as if all of the fighting and exhaustion of the day was for this moment, when it could return to Meng Hao's side to have its head pet. In its heart Meng Hao... was family. They had fought together, they had grown up together. Meng Hao had provided medicinal pills, and whenever he looked over, his gaze was filled with encouragement and warmth.

All of this had caused trust in Meng Hao to grow in its heart. It could depend on Meng Hao, and it would defend him.

The fourth day arrived, and more shouting could be heard. Meng Hao's body continued to tremble, and he heard the sad howl of the mastiff. He wanted to struggle to his feet, but all he couldn't. The poison flare-up filled him with intense pain. Sweat poured off of him, and all he could do was sit there, looking at the magical symbols on the stone stele. That was the only thing he could do.

On the fourth day, nothing came within ten meters of Meng Hao. But that night, when everything grew quiet, it took the mastiff about one hour to slowly crawl back to him.

Meng Hao couldn't see it, but the path the mastiff had crawled was a long streak of blood. Its teeth were smashed, its back caved in. It lay next to him, its head twisted to the side as it licked his palm. With weak whines, it seemed to recount the days' events to Meng Hao.

Meng Hao's eyes were red. He couldn't see the mastiff, but he could sense how weak its Qi was. At the moment, he had become just like a mortal, and he knew that without the mastiff there to protect him, he would have been dead on the first day.

But the price paid for his life was the mastiff's increasingly weak condition. Soon a day would come when it wouldn't be able to crawl back to him at all....

Meng Hao forced his eyes to remain wide open. He stared at the magical symbols on the stone stele, longing for enlightenment. But no matter how he looked at them, he was unable to gain any understanding. It was as if... they were nothing more than magical symbols that had nothing to do with him, an outsider.

And then, the fifth day arrived....

On this day, the miserable cries that reached Meng Hao's ears were more intense than ever before. Now, there were people who approached closer than ten meters. But before they could reach him, they were torn to pieces. Blood showered onto Meng Hao's body, and he heard the increasingly mournful howls of the mastiff.

That night, it took four hours for the mastiff to return. It didn't touch him; it just laid there. Blood oozed out of its mouth, and its life force flickered weakly. It seemed only its stubbornness was keeping it alive. Despite its current state, it would fight to watch over the area... and protect Meng Hao.

Meng Hao could barely open his mouth. His body trembled, wracked with pain, and could barely move. But somehow, he was able to force out speech. "Go! Get out... of here.... Do you hear me...? Go!"

He couldn't see the mastiff. The only thing he could see was the inky black sky.

The mastiff lifted its head to look at Meng Hao. It glanced at the glowing door as if it understood his words. Then it let out a yipping sound.

"I'm telling you to leave!" said Meng Hao, panting, as if it took all the energy he possessed just to say the words.

The mastiff's body trembled, and its eyes filled with sadness. It struggled to its feet, then walked over to Meng Hao's side and licked his face. And then... it didn't leave. It ignored Meng Hao's orders and lay down next to his side.

Meng Hao's heart ached. His eyes were filled with veins of blood as he stared at the stone stele. Suddenly, it grew blurry, and it seemed as if he

had caught sight of something. And yet, he couldn't grasp it. Dawn of the sixth morning broke, and the sound of movement could be heard at the foot of the mountain. A roar sounded out as the mastiff struggled up. It gave Meng Hao one last deep look, and then charged away.

As it left, Meng Hao's hand slowly raised up, quivering. Within his eyes, the Resurrection Lilies flickered. He slowly formed a fist with his hand, and then stood up!

He raised his head to the sky and let loose a roar that had been suppressed for six days. Monstrous killing intent poured from his eyes as he flew into the air. As soon as he flew up, he caught sight of large man wielding an immense club. He had lifted it into the air and was about to smash it down viciously onto the mastiff, who was by now a shapeless wreck.

Meng Hao's face filled with vicious rage. He lifted his hand, and a mist of lightning emerged, shooting toward the large man. When it reached him, it exploded out in a boom. The large man, who happened to have a Cultivation base at the Foundation Establishment stage, shot backward in retreat. In fact, multiple surrounding barbarians all retreated.

Meng Hao strode forward to stand in front of the mastiff. His eyes were bright red as he lifted his hand again. Hundreds of flying swords instantly screamed out, including the two wooden swords. They revolved around Meng Hao, transforming into sword rain, and then a massive whirlpool. Meng Hao cried out, and the flying swords exploded. The shrapnel swept across the surroundings, and blood-curdling screams could be heard as the barbarians in the area were shredded to pieces.

Suddenly, from the foot of the mountain, eight Core Formation Qi auras suddenly shot up. They flew straight up toward the peak of the mountain.

Meng Hao was silent, and in fact completely ignored the approaching figures. He looked down at the mastiff, who was gasping and on the verge of death. He knelt down and gently stoked its broken body. It looked up at him weakly, and tried to open its mouth to lick his hand, but wasn't able to.

Meng Hao slowly looked up at the magical symbols on the stone stele, paying no heed whatsoever to the eight approaching figures. As he stared at the stele, he thought back over the six days. He thought about how the mastiff had risked its life in battle. He thought about back to the happy little puppy that had bounded along after him through the fourth matrix. He thought about the second matrix, when the fluffy, cute little thing had over and over again charged into battle with him. He thought about the very beginning of the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament, how it had appeared, shivering in his palm, and had licked him with its tiny tongue. He sighed.

“I should have realised earlier,” said Meng Hao softly. “These magical symbols are not too different from the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex.” His hand waved through the air, and then no magical symbols could be seen. Instead, they were now inscribed upon his heart, a magical text just like the one that had been inscribed on the stele.

As the text appeared, Meng Hao’s hand came to rest on the mastiff’s back.

As it did, a blood-colored glow suddenly formed within the mastiff. It was bone-piercingly cold as it spread out in all directions.

As it spread out, the Core Formation barbarians were suddenly frozen in place, even as they flew through the air. It wasn’t just them. As the blood-colored glow spread out, the entire mountain of barbarians, everything as far as the eye could see, the whole world, was filled with a Frigid Qi, and turned into the color of blood. This place ... was completely sealed frozen.

Nothing in the entire world moved. Meng Hao knelt there, looking in surprise at the mastiff.

The fifth matrix, the stone stele, and the enlightenment all hinged upon the actions of the Blood Divinity.... The Legacy competitor and the Blood Divinity must develop a certain level of closeness.

After a long time, Meng Hao stood up, holding the mastiff in his arms. He walked toward the peak of the mountain, and the exit of the fifth matrix. The entire world around him was sealed with blood.



Meng Hao wasn't sure how others would pass this matrix. But he knew that for him, its purpose was to strengthen the bond between the Legacy competitor and the Blood Divinity. He also wasn't sure about the Blood Divinities of the others, but he knew that the mastiff had always returned to him. No matter how exhausted it was, it always came back to lick his hand. To Meng Hao this dog... was an inextricable part of his life.

“As of now, the Legacy isn't important to me. I don't care about it a bit. But I'm going to take you out of here with me. This is Meng Hao's promise to you!”

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# Chapter 128: Li Daoyi's Sixth Matrix

As Meng Hao walked out of the fifth matrix carrying the mastiff, Wang Lihai also emerged. His Blood Divinity, the fierce-looking Xuanwu tortoise, was also covered in wounds.

Ahead of Meng Hao and Wang Lihai was Li Daoyi, who still hadn't passed through the sixth matrix.

Behind the two, five people were still stuck in the fifth matrix.

Wang Lihai's gaze fell upon Meng Hao, and his eyes narrowed slightly. Then he sat down cross-legged off to the side. After he emerged from the spell matrix, the power of heaven and earth in the surrounding area rushed into Meng Hao, which he then channeled into the dying mastiff.

Meng Hao produced large amounts of medicinal pills, which he fed one by one to the mastiff to aid in the recovery process.

Thankfully, the spiritual energy was quite thick on the platforms, especially the one outside the fifth matrix. The mastiff absorbed the thick energy from Meng Hao, and its wounds slowly began to heal. Its shattered bones gradually grew back together. After a while, the mastiff was no longer on the verge of death. Having recovered some energy, it licked Meng Hao's palm, and then struggled to its feet and began absorbing spiritual energy on its own.

In the outside world of the Southern Domain, everyone was in a stir. Nearly ten thousand pairs of eyes had all converged on Meng Hao and Wang Lihai; excited discussions filled the air.

Time passed. Seven days later, Song Jia staggered out from the fifth matrix. Her Blood Phoenix did not emerge with her....

She immediately sat down cross-legged. Soon after, a greenish beam of light emerged from the green stone altar off in the distance. It flew down toward Song Jia, who then spit out some blood from her Cultivation base. A blood-colored butterfly magically appeared and began to flutter around her.

Seeing this, Meng Hao came to the conclusion that her Blood Divinity had fallen. He wasn't sure how she had managed to pass through the fifth matrix, but whatever had happened, she now had the chance to select a new Blood Divinity.

A few more days passed. Wang Lihai finished meditating. With a look of determination on his face, he entered the sixth matrix. Song Jia sat there for a long time before following him.

One by one, the rest of the competitors emerged from the fifth matrix, except for the disciple from the Golden Frost Sect, who never appeared. He was the first competitor... to fall in the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament.

After his death, another Cultivator from the outside world entered the Legacy zone. However, considering everyone else had already passed the fifth matrix, unless this person had truly heaven-defying luck, they would never have a chance at acquiring the Legacy. There was simply not enough time.

The death of the Golden Frost Sect disciple caused the young competitor from the Violet Fate Sect to stand thoughtfully for a moment on the platform outside of the fifth matrix. Quite some time passed before he decided to leave, not confident of his ability to pass through the sixth matrix. This could very well be his last opportunity to make it out alive.

After a longer period of thought, the competitor from the Solitary Sword Sect, feeling it unwise to continue on, also opted to leave.

The disciple from the Blood Demon Sect, the one who looked like Wang Youcai from seven or eight years ago, emerged expressionlessly from the fifth matrix and immediately sat down to absorb spiritual energy for a few days. Then, he and his human-shaped Blood Divinity followed Li Daoyi, Wang Lihai and Song Jia into the sixth matrix, making him the fourth to enter.

Of the nine matrixes of the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament, the difficulty seemed to increase exponentially, especially after the fourth matrix. Even for those thoroughly prepared, it was still difficult.

This was especially true of the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth matrixes. In the past seven tournaments, only one person had ever set foot into the ninth matrix.

And that person was a Chosen of the Li Clan!

Other than him, only thirteen competitors had ever made it past the sixth matrix. Only six had ever made it past the seventh matrix.

Starting with the sixth matrix, the level of difficulty, and the consequences of elimination, were increasingly brutal. Therefore, many left after the fifth matrix. Their main goal in participating was not to acquire the Legacy, but to undergo training.

You could say that the experience gained in the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament was something that few Cultivators ever had the opportunity to get.

Several more days passed, and finally Meng Hao opened his eyes. The spiritual energy surrounding him was almost completely dispersed. The second Dao Pillar within him was approximately ninety percent complete. After passing through the sixth portal, he should be able to thoroughly complete it.

The mastiff stood in front of him, completely recovered from injuries and in very high spirits. Once again, its Cultivation base had grown; it was now at the middle Core Formation stage. Its body was fifteen meters long, and it looked like a small mountain. Its red eyes glowed savagely, and its coat of red fur was long and luxurious. Its long, terrifying teeth glittered brilliantly.

Its claws were especially frightening, as long as a person's face, and seemingly powerful enough to rip the earth to pieces.

When Meng Hao stood up, the mastiff seemed especially excited. Meng Hao walked forward, and its mountain-like shape followed along. The sight was an assault on the senses, filled with power, causing the thousands upon thousands of onlookers outside in the Southern Domain to watch on with quaking hearts. This scene would forever be imprinted in their memories.

“The sixth matrix...” Meng Hao looked at it and took a deep breath, then glanced back at the mastiff. Its fierce expression instantly changed. A charming expression showed in its eyes, and it lowered his head so that Meng Hao could pet it. It closed its eyes contentedly.

“I’m definitely going to take you out of here with me!” said Meng Hao, smiling as he looked at the mastiff’s happy expression. His eyes filled with determination. Patting the mastiff’s head one last time, he walked forward, stepping into the sixth matrix. The mastiff’s body turned into a flash of light as it followed.

The sixth matrix!

In this world, the sky was filled with thunder and lightning. As soon as Meng Hao entered, thunderclaps assailed his ears. It was immediately obvious that this world was not very large.

The ground was a sludgy swamp from which emanated the stench of decay and death. Off in the distance... was an enormous ancient temple. The entire temple was pitch black in color, and next to it was a gigantic statue. The statue was clothed in a simple robe, and its right hand was lifted up toward the sky. Its left hand touched the hilt of a sword.

The sword... was floating in mid-air.

The temple seemed almost primordial, and it radiated an ancient air. From this far away, it looked almost like a mountain. Lightning crashed down, seemingly desiring to destroy the temple, as if it did not approve of its existence.

The flashes of lightning illuminated the sludge on the ground. Countless emaciated arms could be seen stretching up from the ooze, reaching and grasping for something. From a distance, the field of arms seemed to stretch out forever.

Also visible within the sludge were faces, from the mouths of which emitted tormented screams. There were men and women, old and young. Bizarre green tentacles grew out from the faces, which swayed back and forth....

Meng Hao looked at all of this, and though he wasn't familiar with this world, nor had he ever seen the temple which lay off in the distance, he was still able to guess its name.

"Doom...." Screams echoed up from the faces within the ooze. The screaming was composed of countless voices combined together. The screams seemed to be filled with rage against the heavens from people who had died unwillingly. The fury would not subside, no matter how many years had passed. This was a part of the name of their Clan.

Doom!

The Ancient Doom Clan, not tolerated by the will of the Heavens. Tribulation extermination was sent, but the clan was not willing to die. They gathered the entire power of their clan to form their sacred temple. They claimed the land as theirs, and defied the heavens. The land could not be harmed, nor the temple destroyed. The Doom Clan could not be completely eradicated!

At the apex of the temple was an enormous drum, completely black in color, as if it had been dyed over and over with blood over the course of countless years.

At the bottom of the temple, next to the gigantic statue, was a stone door, half-open. A glowing light emanated out, illuminating the carvings of various ferocious creatures which decorated the door.

An archaic voice rumbled out like thunder: "If you wish to acquire my Legacy, then enter my temple!" It rang out over the sound of the screams, covering everything.

Meng Hao's eyes flashed, and next to him, the mountain-like, fifteen-meter-long mastiff bared its razor-sharp teeth and glared about. A low growl rumbled in its throat, and a fierce look emanated from its eyes. Its huge frame, and its luxuriant, crimson fur, along with the sharp spurs which protruded from its bones, caused it to look shocking to the extreme.

Thunder rumbled in the sky, and lightning struck constantly, illuminating the land. Meng Hao's body turned into a multicolored beam as he flew into the air, heading straight toward the ancient temple. Behind

him, the mastiff let out a roar, and then followed him.

As soon as the two of them flew into the air, the outstretched hands within the sludge suddenly began to stretch out. In the blink of an eye, they had reached Meng Hao, and were about to grab him.

He let out a cold snort and slapped his bag of holding. The two wooden swords flew out, circling around him at high speed. Blood spattered out as approaching hands were immediately lopped off, before they could even get near Meng Hao.

Black blood spattered down like rain. A foul stench began to fill the air, and, in fact, this entire world. The mastiff's body began to glow red. Not a single arm was able to touch it; they were instantly ripped into shreds.

However, even as Meng Hao and the mastiff sped along, nearly to the half-way point, a forlorn, shrill sound arose from the various faces in the ooze. The green, parasitic tentacles which grew out from them suddenly stood up on end, one by one. They transformed into countless sharp spikes which shot toward Meng Hao.

# Chapter 129: Li Clan Patriarch!

It was impossible to see clearly just how many of the green tentacles shot forth. They were fast, and within the blink of an eye were nearly one hundred meters away from Meng Hao. It seemed as if they would cross the space in an instant. But just then, the mastiff let out a roar and flew up.

Its fifteen-meter-long frame flickered as it shot to defend Meng Hao. A booming sound began to ring out, louder than the thunder, shaking the entire world. A blood-colored glow emanated out from the mastiff, slamming into the incoming tentacles. A shaking boom filled the air, which lasted for the space of about ten breaths. Then, one by one, the tentacles disintegrated into a green mist, which spread all about.

The mastiff appeared tired, but it looked down and let out a roar nonetheless. It moved to the side, and Meng Hao emerged unscathed. He pet the mastiff's head, then continued on toward the ancient temple.

They shot forward at high speed, man and dog together.

When they were about six hundred meters from the temple, the green mist created by the disintegration of the tentacles suddenly started moving. It began to coagulate, and then, in the blink of an eye, transformed into a gigantic mist sphere, directly in Meng Hao's path.

The mist roiled, emitting a rumbling sound as it gradually formed into the shape of a head. It was green colored and illusory, with glowing eyes. It opened its mouth, and more mist poured out. This mist was filled with mist horses, which flew in a beeline toward Meng Hao and the mastiff.

As they approached, Meng Hao's eyes narrowed. He lifted his right hand and waved it in a gesture that only he could recognize as some type of sealing incantation. Then, he pushed his hand down onto the mastiff.

When the seal mark dropped onto the mastiff, a crimson glow began to emanate out. It contained a Frigid Qi that froze everything it touched! The flying mist horses were instantly sealed up!

The arms below, the faces, the sludge, everything was frozen.



If he didn't acquire the Legacy, then Meng Hao shouldn't be able to use this technique outside of this world, because he wouldn't have the Blood Divinity with him. But having received the Legacy of the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex, he was familiar with sealing techniques. This new technique was relatively powerful, and Meng Hao had the feeling that with sufficient research, he could probably use it even without the Blood Divinity, were he at the proper level.

As the crimson glow swept out, sealing everything, Meng Hao continued to shoot forward. Avoiding the gigantic head, he and the mastiff sped on toward the ancient temple.

Just as it seemed they would be able to approach it successfully, an imminent sense of life-and-death danger rose up from within Meng Hao. Suddenly, the mastiff, its body trembling, grabbed his clothes in its mouth and pulled him back.

A boom resounded out as a massive sword blade nearly three meters thick, swung down right in front of Meng Hao. It stabbed into the ground, sending out massive tremors. A massive fissure spread out; at the same time, the ice seal began to split up. In an instant, everything had returned to its normal state.

The massive sword, which moments ago had been floating in mid-air, was being held by the statue which stood outside the temple.

Its descending attack had caused Meng Hao to cough up a mouthful of blood. His face was pale as the mastiff dragged him back. As they retreated, the gigantic statue suddenly seemed to come to life. It slowly lowered its head, and its gaze fell upon Meng Hao. A difficult to describe pressure suddenly enveloped him, filling him with icy cold. It was as if the thing's gaze could see the deepest secrets within him.

As this happened, the arms in the ooze no longer stretched out. Instead, they slowly sucked back into the sludge, as if the statue filled them with dread. The green mist head floating in the air lowered its gaze, seemingly paying respects to the statue.

The thunder and lightning in the sky, however, grew more intense. They

focused on the statue, crashing onto its surface, as if the Heavens wanted the statue to crumble.

Next to Meng Hao, the mastiff trembled and stretched out prone, as if the statue's existence was a force that could not be resisted.

"Tribulation Lightning has fallen for countless years. Even though it is THIS matrix, even though I am not HIM, you still try to destroy my spirit...? Screw off!"

The statue lifted its right hand and snapped its fingers together. An enormous boom filled the air, and the statue's hand seemed to become like a black hole. The lightning quivered, then began to condense together and then collapse into countless arcs of electricity which then disappeared.

In an instant... the sky became completely devoid of lightning. Everything was quiet. The ground quivered, and the countless figures within the sludge trembled. The floating mist head bowed even lower, shaking.

The mastiff behaved the same. It seemed that the will of this statue was something it was incapable of resisting.

"Your Dao Pillar does not conform with the requirements for the Legacy," said the statue, looking coldly at Meng Hao. "You... do not qualify to acquire the Legacy. Considering you made it through the fifth matrix, I won't destroy you. Screw off!" Everything shook as its voice sounded out. Blood spurted from Meng Hao's mouth, and his body was thrown backward hundreds and hundreds of meters. An enormous glowing door appeared near him.

"And you...." said the statue coolly, its cold gaze lowering onto the trembling mastiff. "Second-rate spawn of Blood. You don't even deserve to be consumed by me, let alone become the Weapon Spirit...." Its left hand slowly lifted up the sword, preparing to slash down onto the quivering mastiff.

Meng Hao's eyes were bloodshot. Behind him was the glowing door. All he had to do was step through, and he could leave the sixth matrix. But

what had just happened caused him to stop in his tracks. The effort caused a snapping sound to emanate from his right leg, and he coughed up a mouthful of blood.

“Sir, if I’m not qualified to acquire the Legacy, very well. But please, don’t hurt it....” As Meng Hao’s voice rang out, the mastiff trembled. It wanted to look back at Meng Hao, but the pressure exuded by the statue seemed to have activated some ancient branding within it. It could only tremble, powerless to resist. A weak whine sounded out from its mouth.

The statue’s giant sword paused. It looked at Meng Hao. “You’ve lost your qualifications to leave this place,” it said coolly. The glowing door instantly began to fall to pieces.

The sword swept through the air, not toward the mastiff, but toward Meng Hao. A boom resounded out, and blood exploded from Meng Hao’s body. He lost control of himself, tumbling down toward the sludge.

As he fell, grasping hands reached toward him, claspings onto him, preparing to drag him down inside.

It was at this moment that Meng Hao’s Cultivation base was suddenly restricted; he couldn’t circulate it at all. He could only watch as he was slowly pulled down into the ooze.

His eyes were red, filled with resistance and ferocity.

The mastiff, which was also being suppressed, suddenly let out a shrill howl. Trembling, it lifted its head. Its mountain-like body suddenly exploded with an unprecedented power. Cracking sounds could be heard from inside it. It suddenly seemed as if it would burst into flame, a flame of blood. Suddenly, its body began to expand; it was now thirty meters long. It burst free from the control of the statue and smashed through the ancient seal within itself. It flew up with a roar, charging toward Meng Hao, who was already half sunk into the ooze.

“So, the burning of the Blood spirit....” said the statue coldly. “Blood Divinities are bloodthirsty, and have no feelings. You second-rate spawn of Blood. You do not deserve to have spiritual consciousness.” It raised its left hand, and then the sword began to slash down again, to exterminate both

Meng Hao and the mastiff in one fell swoop.

But then suddenly, before the sword could fall, a look of struggle appeared in the eyes of the statue. The sword paused in mid-air.

“The will of the Blood slave....” said the statue, its voice grim. “Damn you, won’t you just go away? I’m trying to help your master’s Legacy. I want his Legacy to live on, to be acquired by another. Why... why are you resisting me!? There are no rules in this Legacy tournament, so for me to possess you is simply the will of heaven!” The struggle in its eyes gradually began to fade.

Meanwhile, the mastiff’s body was engulfed in a bloody flame. It slammed into the ooze, roaring as the bloody glow of flames emanated in all directions. It instantly turned countless arms into ash. The sludge caved in on itself, revealing a pale-faced Meng Hao. The mastiff grabbed him in its mouth, then flew up into the air, shooting toward the large door in the ancient temple.

It flew with incredible speed, seemingly ready to sacrifice everything to get Meng Hao to the door.

Meng Hao’s eyes snapped open, and he looked at the mastiff. Then he glanced behind, and saw the statue. The struggle was now almost completely gone from its eyes. It stabbed its giant sword into the sludge, and suddenly, the countless arms emanated a demonic glow. They shot up, a myriad of grasping hands, flying toward Meng Hao.

The mastiff glanced down at Meng Hao, and a wistful expression appeared in its eyes. As the myriad of hands closed in, its body erupted into flames. It tossed its head, throwing Meng Hao toward the stone door. It had no time to lick his hand as it had when it was small.

The bloody glow around its body was already fading, and weakness flashed in its eyes. A Death Qi began to emanate out of it as the countless hands surrounded it. The tens up tens of thousands of encircling hands wrenched it down into the ooze.

Its eyes were wistful as it seemed to recall the past. It seemed to be thinking of how it had stretched out on its master’s palm, and how

wonderful it felt to be pet on the head. It remembered all of these things, and thought of its master....

Meng Hao watched all of this dumbfounded. His body slammed into the half-opened door, and the world around him began to fall apart. Everything inside, including the mastiff, disappeared. And yet, what he had just witnessed could never be forgotten.

The mastiff's final glance into his eyes caused him to weep tears of blood, and kindled in him a blazing fury.

Back in the sixth matrix, the struggle within the statue's eyes was completely gone. Its right hand lowered and opened up.

There, standing on the palm of its hand, was a man. He wore a white robe, and was extremely handsome. Swirling in the air next to him was a thirty-meter long Blood Dragon. This was none other than... the Chosen of the Li Clan, Li Daoyi!

He stood on the statue's palm, an expression of utmost respect on his face. He knelt down on one knee and offered a deep salute.

"Junior pays respects to the Patriarch."

# Chapter 130: The Perfect Foundation!!

“What about the rest of them?” asked the statue coolly. Having been called Patriarch by Li Daoyi, and considering what it had said about possession, it seemed that its true identity was now apparent.

This was the Li Clan Chosen who had passed through the eighth matrix four thousand years ago, but had not continued onto the ninth. That was the only interesting or amazing thing that anyone knew about him.

Even after returning to the Li Clan, he said or did little. A thousand years after that, he passed away in meditation. Nowadays, unless you mentioned the Blood Immortal Legacy, no one would even remember him.

However, one of the Li Clan’s deepest secrets, were the final words spoken by that very person. Those words had been passed down from one generation of Li Clan Lord to the next. Actually, the Patriarch... was not dead at all.

His last words stated that after the completion of the eighth Blood Immortal Legacy tournament, the bloodline of Ancient Doom had fallen to the Li Clan!

The person who had emerged from the Legacy tournament four thousand years ago was him, but not all of him. That person contained only a portion of his spirit. The rest of him had forced itself upon the slumbering Blood slave in the sixth matrix. From that day until this, only members of the Li Clan were aware of it.

It was an unimaginably fantastic situation. The Blood slave was incredibly powerful, and the Li Clan Patriarch, being at the Foundation Establishment stage, should not have been able to successfully possess it. In fact, anyone below the Nascent Soul stage shouldn’t be able to. Yet somehow... he had!

No one could possibly know how he’d accomplished it. However, afterwards part of him returned to the Clan missing most of its spirit. It faded away, leaving behind a final will and explanation.

“Patriarch can ignore the disciples of the Song Clan and Blood Demon Sect,” said Li Daoyi with a respectful smile. “And the one who just escaped counts for nothing. However, this Wang Lihai from the Wang Clan must die!” The Blood Dragon next to him lifted its head.

Suddenly, several Blood Divinities appeared in the region surrounding Li Daoyi. One of them was Wang Lihai’s Xuanwu turtle, as well as the Blood Sprite belonging to the young man who looked like Wang Youcai. The Blood Divinities trembled as soon as they appeared, and instantly, the Blood Dragon charged forward and swallowed them whole. They didn’t resist even the least bit.

“A junior member of the Wang Clan...” said the statue coolly, eyeing the Blood Dragon. “Exterminating Wang Clan Chosen is something I can do. I should only be able to help you here within the sixth matrix. As for the following three matrixes, I should be unable to help you directly. However, in the past four thousand years, I have come to understand much about the Blood Immortal Legacy zone. In fact, no one in the world understands more about it than me.

“After possessing your Blood Dragon, I am completely confident that in the time it takes for a few incense sticks to burn, we can charge through the seventh, eighth and ninth matrixes. Then you can acquire the Legacy.”

“Many thanks for your assistance, Patriarch,” replied Li Daoyi respectfully “Junior does not care too much about the Legacy. I am here on the orders of the Clan Lord, to receive you and lead you out.”

“When the eighth Blood Immortal Legacy tournament concluded, the bloodline of Ancient Doom fell to the Li Clan,” said the statue, its voice deep and archaic. “Those words were spoken by me, and are naturally true. The Blood Immortal Legacy belongs to you. I’ve been trapped in here for four thousand years, and have no idea what the outside world has come to be... I wonder how many of my friends from the old days are still alive.” When it finished speaking, the space between its eyebrows split, and a glowing light appeared. As the crack split open, the statue’s body grew dim. The glow flew out, forming a blinding beam of light that shot toward the Blood Dragon.

The Blood Dragon didn't resist. The bloody light entered it, and its entire body spasmed for a few moments. Then its eyes began to glow, emitting an ancient aura. It made a gulping motion, as if it hadn't completely swallowed the other Blood Divinities.

Its body flashed, and suddenly, it expanded until it was three thousand meters long, causing this entire world to shake and tremble. Time passed.

Eventually it shrank back down until it was only sixty meters in length. It circled around Li Daoyi, then flew toward the glowing stone door, and then left the sixth matrix. The only thing that was left behind was the lifeless statue, which stood there quietly, unmoving.

The instant Li Daoyi emerged from the sixth matrix, an uproar emerged among the nearly ten thousand observers outside in the Southern Domain.

Li Daoyi was the last to come out. The first had been Meng Hao, who had flown out, coughing up four or five mouthfuls of blood. He had struggled into a cross-legged position to meditate. His appearance had caused an uproar as he sat there, madly absorbing as much spiritual energy as he could to heal his wounds. Even though his eyes were closed, he radiated an intense killing intent.

After him was the youth from the Blood Demon Sect, who looked like Wang Youcai, and then Song Jia. Both of them seemed to be in bad situations. Their bodies were covered with wounds, and both seemed to have broken bones. Their breath came in ragged pants, and their Blood Divinities were nowhere to be seen.

Gritting their teeth, they sat cross-legged like Meng Hao, using the thick spiritual energy in the area to do breathing exercises to heal their wounds. Their injuries quickly began to heal, but quick glances revealed to both that their Blood Divinities were indeed gone. Complicated, thoughtful expressions appeared on their faces. It was quite obvious what they were thinking.

Wang Lihai didn't emerge. This caused an unprecedented uproar outside. Everyone had seen the blurry image of Wang Lihai disappear within the sixth matrix. This clearly indicated that he had passed away.



The Wang Clan members' minds were instantly sent reeling, especially that of Wang Lihai's Dao Protector and the Wang Clan Elders. Expressions of disbelief filled their faces. Their eyes were instantly shot with blood, and it seemed as if their heads might explode.

The entirety of the Southern Domain was instantly thrown into chaos; no one could possibly have predicted that Wang Lihai would die. This would send the Wang Clan into an unimaginable fury.

Wang Lihai was extremely important among the current generation of the Wang Clan; he was the Dao Child of the Foundation Establishment stage. Chosen could fall, but Dao Children simply could not. This was an generally recognized rule among the various Sects and Clans. This was apparent by the fact that although the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament was important, none of the five Sects had dispatched Dao Children, only Chosen.

The Wang Clan and the Li Clan were the only to have dispatched Dao Children!

The most glad of all was none other than Wang Tengfei. His body trembled with excitement, and he clenched his fist tightly. He had been waiting for this day for a very, very long time. Next to him, Wang Xifan seemed equally excited. The two of them exchanged a look; their futures now seemed filled with limitless possibilities.

When Li Daoyi finally emerged, the sixty-meter long Blood Dragon circling about him, the outside world exploded with shock.

Song Jia slowly stood up, face pale as she exited through the glowing door. She had chosen to give up. After her, the youth from the Blood Demon Sect who looked like Wang Youcai stood up. Ignoring Li Daoyi, he looked at Meng Hao for a moment, and seemed to hesitate. Then, he turned and left through the glowing door, also opting not to continue on.

Their departure caused further uproar in the outside world.

"What exactly happened within the sixth matrix? It looks like no one else has a Blood Divinity except for Li Daoyi. And Wang Lihai... actually died! He's a Dao Child of the Wang Clan!"

“Only Li Daoyi still has a Blood Divinity. And from the look of it, it’s way too powerful! Maybe he really does have a chance of acquiring the Legacy!”

As the discussions continued in the outside world, Meng Hao opened his bloodshot eyes. He slowly stood up and walked toward the glowing door, his expression one of stubbornness. Before he stepped through, he looked back toward Li Daoyi’s blurry figure. What he was looking at, however, was not Li Daoyi, but the clearly visible Blood Dragon.

As he gazed at the Blood Dragon, Meng Hao’s heart began to pound. He wasn’t sure if others had seen it, but the look in the eye of this dragon was exactly the same as that within the statue. His mind flickered as he put the pieces together. He was now eighty to ninety percent sure of what had happened.

As Meng Hao looked over, Li Daoyi let out a derisive chuckle. “Remember my name,” he said. “I’m Li Daoyi. Your dog died a horrible death.” He lifted his hand to rest on the Blood Dragon.

Hearing the words caused Meng Hao’s mind to rumble with the sound of a hundred thousand exploding lightning bolts. Blood dripped from the corners of his lips as he stared murderously at Li Daoyi. Within his eyes burned fury and killing intent that rose to the heavens. He had practiced Cultivation to a very high level, and had desired to kill many people. But at the moment, his desire to kill this person was intense to the extreme.

However, Meng Hao’s personality was such that, the more he wished to kill someone, the more taciturn he became. He had been like this when small, and was even more so now. The more quiet he was, the more vicious he grew. People who like to roar and scream were mere philistines. People who maintained their silence were the truly frightening ones!

A long moment passed. Finally, Meng Hao angrily turned on his heel and walked through the glowing door.

Laughing, Li Daoyi walked forward into the seventh matrix.

When Meng Hao appeared in the volcano, outside of the lake of blood, his eyes burned with the flames of fury. The events that had occurred

within the sixth matrix continued to replay in his mind, and an increasingly profound killing intent emanated from his body.

“Li Daoyi, I, Meng Hao, will send you to your death!” His eyes were filled with blood, causing him to look more ferocious than ever. His body flashed, transforming into a beam of multicoloured light that shot toward Chu Yuyan and her pill concoction workspace.

When he arrived, Chu Yuyan was in the midst of adjusting the earthly flame. The Perfect Foundation Pill was at a critical moment, on the verge of being complete. At first, she had thought that Meng Hao might not make it back in time, and that she would have a chance to study it some. And yet here he was, in complete opposition to her expectation. She considered trying to pull off something tricky, but when she saw Meng Hao’s grim expression, she hesitated. It was obvious that he was like a volcano on the verge of erupting, not someone to be trifled with.

Meng Hao approached and sat down cross-legged, uttering not a word. And yet, his hatred for Li Daoyi, and his desire to kill him, only continued to ferment and grow stronger. An intense, difficult to describe anxiety filled his heart. He refused to believe that the mastiff was dead. He would establish the Perfect Foundation, and then he would rescue the mastiff!

Chu Yuyan didn’t dare to speak. A look of concentration filled her face. She took a deep breath and ground her teeth. Then her hand flickered with an incantation gesture, and she pushed down onto the pill furnace. As she did, the earthly fire and magma beneath roared. The pill furnace quivered.

At the moment, it seemed as if all the mists within the volcano were roiling. The ground trembled. Outside, the wind and clouds seemed to have been disturbed. Great sheets of clouds began to form, one on top of the other, roiling out in all directions. Lightning crackled across the sky, filling the air with massive booms. With every crash of lightning, strange, mystical signs would appear in the the sky outside.

“Is this really a Thunder Pill?” Of course, Chu Yuyan had had her suspicions. But now, seeing the roiling of the mists, and everything above

in the outside world, she was even more sure. This pill... was definitely not some type of Thunder Pill.

“For a pill to provoke this change in the Heavens based on its mere appearance... It seems as if the Heavens wish to destroy the pill itself! Just... just what pill is this!?” Chu Yuyan was shocked to the core. As she pressed down on the pill furnace, a roaring filled the air. Suddenly, the pill furnace collapsed into pieces, sending out a powerful blast. Chu Yuyan coughed up a mouthful of blood as she was flung backward into the stone wall. She instantly fell unconscious.

Meng Hao’s eyes suddenly opened, and he shot forward. As the pill furnace collapsed, the outside world filled with lightning and roaring, and the ground quaked, filling with cracks and fissures. Meng Hao reached out... and snatched the mystical seven-colored pill from within the furnace!

The Perfect Foundation Pill!

This pill was a defiance of the Heavens, not permitted by heaven and earth. The world outside the volcano rumbled. The layers of clouds shone brightly as they churned. A seemingly infinite amount of lightning was gathering, preparing to eradicate the pill which Meng Hao held in his hand. If anyone dared to consume this pill in the face of the Heavens, then they would face intense Tribulation of lightning!

The Heavens did not permit this type of pill to exist, nor did they permit anyone to consume such a pill. Swallowing it down constituted a type of Cultivation that warranted destruction! This path was a path of continued Heavenly tribulation!

And yet, Meng Hao did not hesitate. As he held the pill in his hand, it seemed as if it were beginning to melt. He had the feeling that if he did not immediately consume it, the pill would disappear on its own, without any help from Tribulation Lightning!

He didn’t know why this was happening, and didn’t have time to think about it. Nor did he have any time to think about duplicating the pill. Even as he looked at it, it began to show signs that it was about to fall apart.

Resolve filling his eyes, Meng Hao placed the pill into his mouth. Above, lightning condensed and prepared to fall down.

When the pill entered his mouth, it dissolved instantly and traveled down into his abdomen. A roar filled him, along with a strange power that seemed as if it might cause his entire body to collapse. This was not the power of heaven and earth, but something else, something difficult to describe. At this moment, Meng Hao's Dao Pillar began to tremble.

As it trembled, the crack on its surface suddenly began to show signs of healing. A feeling of perfection condensed within Meng Hao's body. His flesh and blood seemed to grow tougher. His golden Dao Pillar hummed and seemed to expand. His flesh began to shine with a faint golden glow that grew stronger and stronger.

He sensed a feeling of power that he had never before experienced with his Flawless Foundation. Along with it, his view of the world suddenly changed. His Spiritual Sense experienced unbridled growth. Everything in his body was changing. The Perfect Foundation, which had not been seen in the Cultivation World for tens of thousands of years, was now evolving!

According to the legends, a Perfect Foundation had not been seen in millennia. But here it was in Meng Hao. The power of his Spiritual Sense far exceeded that of the middle Foundation Establishment stage. In fact, Meng Hao knew that if he had enough spiritual energy, he could instant form his second and third Dao Pillars!

Furthermore, he knew that future Dao Pillars that appeared would also be legendary Perfect Dao Pillars!

At this moment, booming sounded out in the sky above. Up in the air, an enormous lightning bolt shot down toward the volcano, slamming into the glowing shield.

When it hit the shield, each and every one of the seven Blood Immortal Legacy zones around the Southern Domain suddenly erupted with a blood-red glow. The bloody glow instantly wiped out the images that the onlookers had been watching, and shot toward the Heavens, forming enormous pillars of blood.

Around each of these pillars of blood whipped blood-red iron chains. Furthermore, on top of each pillar was a blurry, bound figure who let loose agonized screams.

All of this happened too suddenly. The audiences surrounding the seven Legacy zones were astonished, unsure of what was happening.

“What’s going on?! What happened!?”

“The blood screen shot up into the sky! We can’t see what’s happening inside the Legacy zone. What’s going on?!”

The Cultivators of the Southern Domain were one and all thrown into chaos. Multiple figures flew up out of the various temples of the five great Sects and three great Clans. All of these were ancient Cultivators who usually spent their time in secluded meditation. However the intensity of the outside events had awoken them, and one by one they appeared.

“The Blood Immortal Sacrifice! This is the legendary Ancient Doom Clan Blood Immortal Sacrifice!!”

“According to the legends, if anyone tries to invade the Ancient Doom Clan, then the Blood Immortal Sacrifice will appear. But the Ancient Doom Clan has long since been put down. Who could their enemy possibly be....”

As the booming filled the Southern Domain, Meng Hao stood within the volcano, staring up into the sky and roaring. He quickly took unconscious Chu Yuyan and wrapped her up in the black net, then set her to the side. After that, his body turned into a prismatic beam as it shot toward the Blood Immortal’s sacrificial altar.

Above him, the Tribulation Lightning descending, causing the glowing shield to tremble. And yet even as it trembled, a bright red glow erupted from within the volcano, transforming into a massive pillar of blood. This towering pillar of blood was the eighth to appear within the Southern Domain.

Generally speaking, the Blood Immortal altar would never do this; but Meng Hao had consumed a Perfect Foundation Pill and provoked

Tribulation Lightning. It was the booming of the Tribulation Lightning upon the Blood Immortal sacrificial altar's shield that provoked this defensive reaction.

Attacking this shield was the same as attacking the Blood Immortal!

"Wait for me," said Meng Hao, the killing intent pouring out of his eyes. "I promised you that I would take you out with me. You wait for me, I'm coming to save you. Then, we will kill Li Daoyi together!" He flew forward light lightning, into the altar, not hesitating in the slightest.

The instant he entered....

Clouds billowed and wind whipped inside the Blood Immortal Legacy zone. Past the ninth matrix, the skeleton sat cross-legged, trembling. It slowly lifted its skeletal head, within which a powerful glow appeared. It was a strange glow, but somehow it made the skull look excited.

"Finally... I've been waiting...."

Within the eighth matrix, everything shook, and the sky seemed as if it would split open. A deep red glow covered everything. Moments ago everything had been completely silent, but suddenly howls filled the air. The howling seemed to contain excitement!

In the seventh matrix, the only thing that could be seen was an ancient tomb. Inscribed above the tomb were three characters: Tomb of Heaven!

Within the tomb was a coffin nearly three thousand meters long. Inside were heaps of bones, at the centre of which could be seen a dilapidated flag. The flag had three streamers, upon each of which was written a name. Seemingly having fallen victim to the passing of years, the first two names were not clear. However, the third was quite visible.

It was the surname "Ji."

Standing within the tomb, Li Daoyi looked around in surprise. The ground shook and the sky roared. It seemed as if everything were spinning. The Blood Dragon next to him lifted its head, and it lifted its claws as if it were calculating something. Suddenly, its expression changed.

“Quickly. There’s no need to take the Three Immortal Souls Flag. Like I said, we need to proceed directly to the ninth matrix. If we are late... the Legacy will not be yours!!”

“What’s happening?!” said Li Daoyi, his face unsightly.

“The Legacy has long been awaiting someone who defies the Heavens as much as the Ancient Doom Clan. That person has arrived! But, we still have a chance. The Blood Immortal is dead, and whoever reaches him first will acquire the Legacy!!”

“If I had known the Legacy would select him, I would have destroyed him. With him dead, I would be the destined successor!” Li Daoyi’s eyes flashed with killing intent.

“Killing him before would have been simple, but now that he is within the Blood Immortal’s Legacy zone, who would dare to kill him! Who can kill him?!” The Blood Dragon circled around Li Daoyi, suddenly expanding to three thousand meters in length, clearly urgently desiring to leave.

Meanwhile, outside in the Southern Domain, in the Ancient Temple of Doom, one of the three Danger Zones, the temple itself seemed to be coming alive. Inside the ancient temple were countless statues, all of which usually stood there unmoving. Even if someone entered the temple, they wouldn’t change.

But now, these tens upon tens of thousands of statues suddenly began to shake. Their eyes opened, and they lifted their heads toward the Heavens. The entire Clan then let out a defiant howl. As the howl reverberated out, the statues began to fly up into the air and circle around the temple.

Quite a few Cultivators were on watch nearby the temple, and this instantly caused them to be completely shocked.

What caused even more disbelief to be written on their faces was when multiple ghost images of the Ancient Temple of Doom suddenly appeared. It was as if the soul of the temple suddenly was rising up from within the earth. It transformed into a blinding beam of light, carrying the tens upon tens of thousands of statues with it. As it soared up into the sky, the temple assumed the shape of an enormous war chariot, and the statues



became thousands upon thousands of soldiers and warhorses. A Clan of countless warriors and warhorses, ready to do battle with the Heavens!

At the end of this chapter, the author Er Gen wrote a long article talking about how he will work hard to update as much as possible. He also asked for the audience to support the novel! So, I guess I'll take this opportunity to do the same. Currently I guarantee 7 free chapters per week, and up to 4 sponsored chapters per week. I'm also trying to adjust my schedule to bring more than that total of 11 per week. Thanks to everyone for the comments and support, and thanks to the sponsors who help to bring more of this awesome story to all of us!

# Chapter 131: I'm Here to Keep My Promise!

The Southern Domain was in an uproar. Eight columns of blood rose toward the Heavens, sending ripples throughout the sky above. The phantasmic war chariot formed by the Ancient Temple of Doom caused astonishment to fill the hearts of any and all who could see it.

At the same time, Meng Hao stepped foot into the Blood Immortal Legacy zone. When his foot touched onto the platform outside the sixth matrix, a tremor ran through the entire world, and a shocking rumble filled the air.

The platform continued to shake, all of the spell matrixes started to radiate light, and a roiling mist began to fill the surroundings. Countless beams of greenish light shot up from the sacrificial altar, swirling around and then shooting toward Meng Hao. The glittering beams seemed to be filled with excitement and hope as they waited for Meng Hao to select one of them to be his Blood Divinity.

Some of the greenish beams emitted Qi that seemed to be even more powerful than the Blood Dragon or the Blood Sprite.

Even more hard to describe was how the spiritual energy of this place surged toward Meng Hao as he breathed in. It entered his body, causing his Cultivation base to begin to circulate. With every breath he took, his body grew stronger.

Wind and clouds surged, and the entire Legacy zone trembled. Thunderous roars sounded out everywhere.

A strange feeling rose up within Meng Hao; it seemed as if the Blood Immortal Legacy was calling out to him. The spell matrix, the platform, the Qi, everything seemed different than from before!

Of course, the people the outside world in the Southern Domain couldn't see any of this. What was happening inside was now cut off from them; not even the slightest image was visible. The only person who could see anything... was Li Daoyi. Having charged through the seventh matrix, he now stood on the platform beyond it. His face was grim, and his eyes

shone with an intense light. He glared back at Meng Hao standing on the platform outside the sixth matrix.

Next to him was the three thousand meter long Blood Dragon possessed by the Li Clan Patriarch. It too was looking at Meng Hao, its eyes radiating both intense jealousy as well as a complex, hard-to-describe expression.

“So the Legacy belongs to him....” Li Daoyi raised his head up and let out a hearty laugh. “There’s nothing I love in life more than stealing away the rightful Legacies of others. What a wonderful feeling.” His laughter rang out as he stepped forward into the eighth matrix.

When the laughter reached Meng Hao’s ears, he looked up, and a profound look of enlightenment shone from within his eyes. He looked at Li Daoyi with intense killing intent.

He did not race in pursuit. Instead, he waved his right hand, causing all of the greenish beams of light in front of him to fall back. He did not pick any of them to be his Blood Divinity.

“I only have one Blood Divinity!” he said to himself, his eyes radiating stubbornness.

He did not enter the seventh matrix. He did something that no competitor had ever done throughout the ancient history of the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament. He... turned around and walked back into the sixth matrix!

“I promise that I will find you and take you out of here with me,” he said quietly, and then disappeared. When he reappeared, lightning filled the sky. Innumerable arms stretched out from the sludge that covered the ground. Off in the distance, the frozen, motionless form of the gigantic statue still stood next to the pitch-black form of the Ancient Temple of Doom.

It was the same world, but Meng Hao was not the same person.

He no longer had a Flawless Foundation. His rapidly healing Dao Pillar had propelled him into the realm of the legendary Perfect Foundation!

As soon as he stepped forth into the sixth matrix, he flew up into the air,

radiating power from within his Cultivation base. He took a breath, and everything shook. Thunder and lightning crashed, and the earth trembled. Because of his Perfect Foundation, Meng Hao could not absorb even the slightest bit of spiritual energy in the outside world, but this place was filled with massive amounts spiritual energy which rushed toward Meng Hao, filling him. As he breathed, Meng Hao could sense that he was like... the lord of this world!

Lightning and thunder crashed in the sky, and Meng Hao's long hair whipped about. He lifted his right hand and waved it downward toward the ground.

As his palm descended, the sludge began to quiver. The grasping hands suddenly stopped moving, and the countless faces all looked toward Meng Hao. Their expressions were no longer hostile, but rather filled with veneration and even excitement.

Suddenly, a massive crack split the earth and the sludge. It grew wider and deeper, splitting apart the hands and faces along with it. Meng Hao flew down toward it.

As he approached it, the sludge crept away, not daring to come close to him, as if a deep fear of him existed within it.

Meng Hao shot inside, his body flashing like lightning and radiating determination. The crack grew wider and wider, and within the space of a few breaths, Meng Hao came to a stop. Even as the crack grew larger, he saw it, there, deep within... a body.

It was not thirty meters long. It was the mastiff, but only the size of a palm. Its eyes were closed, and patches of fur were visible through the sludge that covered its body. Its fur wasn't red, but deathly gray. It was no longer fierce and savage. And the cute, furry puppy it had once been, now existed only in Meng Hao's eternal memories.

He thought about how as it grew up, it would run in circles around his feet, letting out playful yipping sounds, its fur rippling.

Many images unfolded in Meng Hao's mind. He thought of how he and the mastiff had rushed together head on into battle in the third matrix. He

thought about how it had happily run back and forth around him in the desert of the fourth matrix.

He thought about how the poison flare-up had reduced him to little more than a mortal in the fifth matrix, and how the mastiff had protected him regardless of everything. He thought about how after every battle, it would crawl back to him, lick his hand and lay next to him, watching over him vigilantly.

He had tried to make it leave, but it chose to stay.

In the end, in the sixth matrix, it had chosen to help its master escape even at the cost of its own life. The last thing Meng Hao remembered was watching as the myriad of grasping hands pulled it away from him, not even giving it a chance to lick his hand.

“I do not permit you to die here. You’re not allowed to close your eyes!” Meng Hao’s eyes were filled with veins of blood. One of his hands came to rest on the mastiff’s tiny body. The other lifted up toward the sky. The power of his Cultivation base roared to life. Everything shook as the crack in Meng Hao’s Dao Pillar was completely sealed up!

When this happened, Meng Hao’s body trembled. He felt an incredible power within him, not a power of circulation between heaven and earth. This was a power of circulation in which he formed his own heaven and earth!

In this instant, he was not absorbing the surrounding spiritual energy, he was plundering it!

From this moment on, the spiritual energy of heaven and earth could only enter his body, it couldn’t circulate back. He was like a wound in heaven and earth that could never be healed; the spiritual energy lost to him, would never be returned.

His eyes glowed with a strange light, and his hair whipped around his head. His Qi grew more and more powerful, and a golden light emanated out from his entire body. He bit the tip of his tongue and spit out some blood; the blood descended down onto the corpse of the mastiff, but it was incapable of absorbing it.

“Your life was born of my blood; you grew from ignorance into spiritual consciousness....” Meng Hao stretched out his hand, and the blood congealed onto his palm, forming into a Blood Globe, which he then pushed down onto the mastiff, forcing it to absorb into the body.

At the same time, his Cultivation base erupted and he began to forcibly suck in all of the spiritual energy within the sixth matrix. Meng Hao was like a black hole, causing everything to whirl toward him at fantastic speed.

Boundless spiritual energy poured into him, which he then transferred into the body of the mastiff. Time passed. The sludge covering the ground was beginning to dry up, and the arms and faces were beginning to crumble. Even the lightning had disintegrated into power which Meng Hao then absorbed.

The sky grew dim, and cracks spread out across it....

Off in the distance, the statue began to fall to pieces....

The Ancient Temple of Doom began to grow blurry and eventually faded away. The entire world grew deathly still. Only Meng Hao and the mastiff remained....

Its body twitched. It seemed to be struggling to open its eyes. It could sense the Qi of its master. Slowly, it opened its eyes and looked at Meng Hao.

Boom!

The entire sixth matrix began to fall apart! Meng Hao pulled back his hand. The mastiff’s body trembled, but its eyes were filled with the fire of life. As the world crumbled around them, it slowly rose to its feet!

It was not a true life, so it had not truly died. It was a Blood Spirit, a Blood Divinity and therefore... could be reborn!

Throughout the ancient history of the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament, no Blood Divinity had ever been reborn. It... was the first. The first thing it saw when it opened its eyes... was its master, who had raised it from an unaware puppy into spiritual consciousness.

ROARRRR!!!

The mastiff lifted its head up and let out a thunderous roar. Its body rapidly expanded. In the blink of an eye it grew to sixty meters in length. Luxuriant fur grew out that was not red in color, but violet!

Its fur was violet and its stature like a small mountain. Sharp spikes grew out of its limbs, and from the top of its head protruded a long horn. Its teeth were long and sharp. All of this made the mastiff look even more fearsome and powerful than it had before!

As far as this world was concerned, it was completely ferocious and bloodthirsty. It was a blood Divinity, emotionless and cold. But there was one person who could make it act like it had when it was small, who could make it lick his hand, who would pet its head.

There was only one person like this in existence!

# Chapter 132: Perfect Dao Pillar!

Meng Hao emerged onto the platform, and behind him, the sixth matrix collapsed in complete destruction. If onlookers from the outside world could see this, they would be shocked.

In the entire history of the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament, never before had a spell matrix been destroyed!

It didn't stop there.... Not only did the sixth matrix crumble, further back, the first matrix also began to tremble. With a bang, it shattered, and as it did, massive amounts of spiritual energy spread out.

The spiritual energy immediately flew toward Meng Hao and the mastiff, who both absorbed it. The boundless spiritual energy thrummed within Meng Hao.

At this moment, his second Dao Pillar coalesced. It was Perfect, without even the slightest crack visible. A second Perfect Dao Pillar! Meng Hao's Cultivation base soared up with explosive momentum.

An intensely powerful Qi emanated out from Meng Hao, and as it did, Meng Hao's body flashed. Behind him, the second matrix as well as the third suddenly began to collapse into pieces. It seemed as if the entire Blood Immortal Legacy tournament would not continue past the eighth tournament.

Meng Hao lifted his head and looked at the seventh matrix. His eyes radiated with killing intent as he stepped into it.

The mastiff lifted its head up and roared, then turned into a beam of light and followed Meng Hao into the seventh matrix.

Within the seventh matrix was an enormous tomb with three shocking, blood-red characters inscribed above it.

Tomb of Heaven!

As soon as Meng Hao stepped foot inside, the Tomb of Heaven began to shake. Cracks appeared on the wooden coffin inside, and the countless white bones began to disintegrate into ash. A black mist emanated from



the dilapidated flag.

Boom!

A massive booming sound echoed out as the Tomb of Heaven exploded like an erupting volcano. The three-sectioned flag flew up, fluttering in the air and emitting a power which instantly caused Meng Hao to look at it with narrow eyes. In an instant, it had disappeared, soaring out of the seventh matrix and flying directly toward the altar beyond the ninth matrix, and the throne. The flag flew past the skeleton wearing the featureless mask, transforming into three white hairs on the skeleton's black head of hair.

At the same time, the seventh matrix crumbled to pieces in front of Meng Hao's eyes. Along with its collapse, vast amounts of spiritual energy thundered toward him.

This nearly indescribable force of majestic spiritual energy caused a third Dao Pillar to begin to appear within Meng Hao. He moved forward to stand on the seventh matrix's pillar. Behind him, the second, third and fourth matrixes all toppled into fragments. The way back was now gone. Only the fifth matrix remained behind him and it too was showing signs of fragmentation.

Multiple matrixes had collapsed, sending out dense spiritual energy which formed a mist that covered the sky of the Legacy zone. The mist began to swirl into a vortex, at the very center of which, was none other than Meng Hao!

From a distance, the sight was nothing more than shocking.

Meng Hao sucked in the spiritual energy, as did the mastiff.

The Cultivation bases of both man and dog climbed upward. Meng Hao's cold eyes stared forward toward the eighth matrix. Though the figure there was blurry, it was obviously Li Daoyi, whose head was turned back to look at Meng Hao.

"How can he destroy the matrixes so quickly!?" Li Daoyi's heart trembled. He knew that Meng Hao was the destined successor of the

Legacy, but was still completely shocked.

The blood dragon roared. "These matrixes have been waiting for his arrival. They're all destroying themselves to make way for him. But the Blood Immortal is dead. As long as you are fast enough, the Legacy will be yours!"

A cold light shone within Li Daoyi's eyes and he immediately strode forward into the ninth matrix.

"Maybe the Legacy belongs to you..." he said, "but I'm here now. I'll snatch it right out of your grasp!"

Seeing Li Daoyi and the anxious-looking Blood Dragon enter the ninth matrix, Meng Hao's killing intent flashed brightly. Without hesitation, he shot forward toward the eighth matrix, followed by the mastiff.

As they entered, a frightening howling emerged from the abyss that was the eighth matrix. The howling was mixed and disorderly, as if countless souls were crying out at the same time with both excitement and hope. As the sound echoed out, the world of the eighth matrix began to crack and fall apart.

The matrix was destroying itself, which was a mystical command left behind by the Blood Immortal before his death. One of his commands had been that the first person to stand before him could acquire the Legacy. However, another command was if any person rejected by the Heavens appeared, then the nine matrixes would collapse, transforming into spiritual energy to help him acquire the Legacy.

The instant the eighth matrix fell apart, majestic spiritual energy rushed toward Meng Hao and the mastiff. The mastiff lifted its head up and roared. Its Cultivation base had just broken through from Core Formation to Nascent Soul!

Its body grew to three hundred meters in length, and looked even more ferocious than before. The violet-furred mastiff lifted up its head and roared, causing everything to tremble. Its body emanated an unprecedented power, difficult to even describe!

At the same time, Meng Hao's third Perfect Dao Pillar was more than half formed, and continued to coalesce. As soon as he stepped onto the platform past the eighth matrix, the fifth matrix behind him disintegrated.

There were no platforms left behind him. There were no spell matrixes. There was only dense spiritual energy, forming a foggy sea that enveloped the entire interior of the Legacy zone.

Ahead of Meng Hao was the ninth matrix, within which was Li Daoyi, receiving the aid of the Blood Dragon. However, he hadn't emerged from it yet!

"Li Daoyi!" Meng Hao's killing intent rose to the heavens. His Nascent Soul stage mastiff followed him as he rushed into the final matrix.

The instant he entered, the platform that he had been on collapsed. However, at that same moment, Li Daoyi emerged out of the ninth matrix!

As soon as he did, he coughed up a mouthful of blood. The Blood Dragon looked beleaguered. Obviously their swift passage through the ninth matrix had come at quite a price for the Blood Dragon possessed by the four-thousand-year-old Li Clan Patriarch.

"The fact that the destined Legacy successor is here is a good thing. The spell matrix is weakened, which made it much easier to pass through. Daoyi, ascend the sacrificial altar! When you stand before the Blood Immortal, you will become the second generation successor!" The Blood Dragon roared, an expression of unprecedented excitement and anticipation covering its face. If Li Daoyi acquired the Legacy, then it would be able to enter the Immortal treasure and become the Weapon Spirit. Then, he would never die!

Excited laughter spilled out of Li Daoyi's mouth.

"This Legacy is mine!" he cried, laughing loudly, his face savage and cruel. The Li Clan had paid a heavy price for this Legacy, and he had been appointed to acquire it. In the past, he had truly believed in his heart that he was the person destined to receive the Legacy.

But then Meng Hao had appeared, and the Patriarch had said what he

said. Then the spell matrixes had begun to collapse, without Meng Hao even striking a blow against them. Li Daoyi could not deny that this nameless Cultivator was the true destined successor.

But he refused to comply. He refused be resigned to this truth. He would snatch the Legacy for himself!

“I’ll take your Legacy and exterminate you!” laughed Li Daoyi. “I’ll wrest away your destiny!” He leaped forward, shooting straight toward the massive, green-colored altar.

Within the ninth matrix, everything was black. There seemed to be no end to it. Buried deep below the surface of the land in this place was a skeleton. The skeleton looked up, and within its empty eyes, a burning light appeared. It seemed to be the fire of hope, piercing up through the earth until it reached Meng Hao.

“The Legacy of the Blood Immortal has waited countless years for the hoped for one to appear...” murmured the skeleton softly. “I hope that in the end, you can avoid treading that path of no return which my Lord the Immortal tread....” The light in its eyes slowly faded into nothing. Its body transformed into drifting ash.

With that, the ninth matrix shuddered, and then split up into countless pieces. Again, massive amounts of spiritual energy poured toward Meng Hao. This in turn caused Meng Hao’s third Dao Pillar to appear in full!

A third, perfect Dao Pillar!

Meng Hao had now reached the peak of the early Foundation Establishment stage! His Spiritual Sense rapidly increased, far beyond that ordinarily seen at the late Foundation Establishment!

With one more Dao Pillar, he would be at the mid Foundation Establishment stage. That having been said, even though he wasn’t at the mid Foundation Establishment stage, his Perfect Foundation made him so strong that he could easily crush someone of the mid Foundation Establishment. Even late Foundation Establishment Cultivators with a Cracked or Fracture foundation were not his match.

Once Meng Hao formed his fourth Dao Pillar and reach the mid Foundation Establishment stage, the only Foundation Establishment Cultivators in the entire Southern Domain who would be qualified to battle him would be those who had completed the Great Circle of Foundation Establishment, and were on the verge of Core Formation.

People such as that were groomed by various Sects and Clans to be their most powerful disciples. Experts like that were addressed as... Dao Children!

For the most part, they all had Flawless Foundations, and because of their battle prowess, Cultivation bases, and various bits of luck, were the top experts in their stage. Yes, these were the Dao Children of the Southern Domain!

Li Daoyi was a Dao Child of the Li Clan. Wang Lihai had also been a Dao Child. These were people who could outclass Chosen. Within each Clan and Sect, there was only one Dao Child per stage!

The instant Meng Hao's third Perfect Dao Pillar appeared, he strode out onto the platform outside the ninth matrix. Off in the distance, atop the greenish altar, sitting in the stone throne, was a skeleton. It slowly lifted its head and looked at... Li Daoyi!

Its hand lifted to grasp the mask on its face. Then, it began to take off the mask!

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# Chapter 133: Do You Dare?!

Once the mask came off, the skeleton would hand it to the person standing in front of it. That person would be the winner of the Legacy. This mask was the Legacy treasure!

The Blood Dragon next to Li Daoyi looked excited. It had waited for this day for four thousand years. Once it entered the mask, it would become the Weapon Spirit and would finally be able to leave this place and return to the Southern Domain.

“The Legacy is mine!” said Li Daoyi, his eyes glittering. However, it was at this exact moment that Meng Hao stepped out of the ninth matrix. When he saw what was happening, he didn’t hesitate in the slightest. His body shot forward at high speed.

After achieving the Perfect Foundation and then entering this place, a strange feeling had appeared inside Meng Hao. It was as if he was the lord of this Legacy zone. The feeling had grown even stronger after the destruction of the ninth matrix.

Next to him, the three-hundred-meter long mastiff raised its head to the sky and roared. Thanks to its incredible speed, it had arrived here even before Meng Hao.

“This is my Legacy,” said Meng Hao his eyes flashing. “If I feel like ignoring it, that’s my business. But if you think you can just steal it away, well, that will depend on your luck!” He had experience stealing Legacies, and that in itself didn’t make him angry. It was his opponent’s tactics that pissed him off.

Meng Hao’s desire to slay Li Daoyi had reached epic heights; utilizing the full power of his Cultivation base, he strode forward, his hand flashing an incantation gesture. The Lightning Flag flew out, as well as two wooden swords, which emanating a freezing pressure. They all shot toward Li Daoyi.

In the same moment, the skeleton lifted the mask off of its face, and instantly turned into drifting ash. As the ash drifted out, the hand that

held the mask also dissolved. The mask floated toward Li Daoyi.

Excitement filled Li Daoyi's face. His right hand lifted up to grab the mask, but the instant he touched it, his hand was shoved away by the mask itself. It wasn't that he couldn't take it, but rather, before he could, it required a Weapon Spirit. Then it would become his.

The instant his hand was shoved away, the Blood Dragon lifted its head in a roar and then shot toward the mask. Currently, the mask had no Weapon Spirit. Whoever entered and took over the mask would assume that role.

As soon as he slammed into the mask, the mask became like a vortex. The Blood Dragon was half way into the mask when suddenly the mastiff roared. The roar created ripples in the entire area, and it sped forward. Ignoring the fact that the Blood Dragon was already in the process of taking over the mask, its three hundred meter long body slammed into it.

The mastiff's body was sucked in as soon as it touched the surface of the mask. Its fight with the Li Clan Patriarch for control of the mask had begun!

"You don't know your own limitations," echoed out the voice of the Li Clan Patriarch. "When I become the Weapon Spirit, I shall consume you!" He had completely entered the mask, and yet, so had the mastiff.

A blinding red light emanated from the mask. And yet, within the redness could also be seen violet! It was as if two brilliant colors were trying to swallow each other up!

Because of this, the mask did not belong to Li Daoyi, and neither did it belong to Meng Hao. Which Blood Divinity took over the mask would determine the winner of the Legacy.

Furthermore... a situation in which two Blood Divinities struggled to be the Weapon Spirit was something the Blood Immortal had never imagined could happen. This was completely unprecedented.

There was one thing that was for sure.... Whoever won, mastiff or Blood Dragon, would experience an unimaginable increase in power. At the very

least, the winner would break halfway through to Spirit Severing. With the proper Dao enlightenment, the winner could even reach full Spirit Severing!

“It was useless to save that second-rate Blood spirit,” laughed Li Daoyi. “It will just help me to acquire the Legacy!” Meng Hao approached, and their eyes locked. Now that the Legacy zone was beginning to crumble, at long last the two of them were in the same world together.

Meng Hao said one sentence: “Killing you will resolve all the issues.” He continued to move toward Li Daoyi.

“That’s exactly what I was going to say!” laughed Li Daoyi. He lifted his right hand, and it blazed with light. In front of him appeared a shining golden war chariot which shot toward Meng Hao.

Suddenly, a roaring sound filled the air and blood leaked out of Meng Hao’s mouth. He retreated backward. Li Daoyi’s face flickered, and he also retreated, blood spilling out of his mouth. He looked at Meng Hao, and it was at this moment that the entire Legacy zone began to crumble around them. Cracks appeared all over the surface of the dark green sacrificial altar.

Everything began to split up. Popping sounds could be heard, and from the appearance of everything, it seemed the Blood Immortal would destroy itself and disappear.

Anyone who didn’t leave, would be buried along with it!

The struggle inside the mask between the mastiff and the Blood Dragon seemed to be escalating. Originally, the mastiff would never have been a match for the Blood Dragon. But it had been resurrected by absorbing blood from Meng Hao’s Perfect Foundation. This had changed it into something never before seen among Blood Divinities.

The spiritual energy in the area rushed toward the mask, being absorbed by both the mastiff and the Blood Dragon. The difference was, however much the mastiff absorbed, it could use. None of it leaked out. With the Blood Dragon, this was not so.



Amongst the two of them, although the Blood Dragon started out with the upper hand, after a short time had passed, it was still unable to get rid of the mastiff. It also had no way to take control of the Legacy mask.

Seeing this, Li Daoyi's expression changed, and he retreated. He flicked his wide sleeve in an attempt to snatch the mask, but was again rebuffed violently. With no Weapon Spirit in control of it, no one could dare to take it away!

The Blood Immortal had never predicted such an unusual situation. Normally speaking, one person should arrive to take the mask. The Blood Divinity would be able to take control of the mask within the space of a few breaths, and would become the Weapon Spirit. Then the Legacy zone would begin to collapse, and the winner could take the mask and leave.

Instead, something completely unexpected had occurred, and thus a shocking life-or-death crisis had come to be!

The world was crumbling around them. Down below, a huge vortex had appeared which was swallowing up everything. Nothing that entered could ever come out again. The destruction all around was creating an empty world!

Up above was a glowing shield, upon which ripples were beginning to form. It would only last for so long before it too shattered. This shield was the only exit to the outside world.

Entering that shield was the only way to escape destruction.

No one was in control of the mask. Both parties refused to budge. The mask could not be taken out, and the world was being destroyed. When Li Daoyi realized what was happening, his expression twisted.

Meng Hao, on the other hand, was completely calm. He moved backward for a moment, wiping away the blood from his mouth. Then he advanced forward. His three Perfect Dao Pillars emitted a powerful spiritual power, and as he charged ahead, his right hand flickered in an incantation sign. Instantly, a three-hundred-meter long Flame Python roared into being and shot toward Li Daoyi.

Actually, this was no python, it was a dragon! A roaring, gold dragon, enveloped in scorching flame. Behind it flew a Wind Blade thirty meters long. Burning wind filled the area, enveloping Li Daoyi.

Up to now in his Cultivation, Meng Hao hadn't learned very much magic techniques. All of his magical techniques were from the Qi Condensation stage, and he had none whatsoever from the Foundation Establishment stage. This was one of his weaknesses, and Meng Hao was well aware of it.

"We will see who is more ruthless...." said Li Daoyi with a cruel laugh. He could clearly see that the magic being used was unconventional. But he had also already determined that it would be difficult to quickly achieve victory. The true key to victory, was who would stay the longest in this collapsing world. Whoever left first without the mask, would lose any qualification to be the winner of the Legacy.

Li Daoyi's face was grim. He was a Dao Child of the Li Clan. The title of Dao Child was something he had won through pure slaughter. He was out for himself, and would kill without hesitation. As far as stealing luck from others, this was something he had done before more than once. He had come from an unremarkable branch of the Li Clan to become a Dao Child, far above Chosen.

This was all because of his personality. He arrogantly believed his stubbornness to be one of his greatest assets. Suddenly, a fan appeared in his hand. It was a fan of four colors, and when he waved it, the colors expanded out, slamming into Meng Hao's Fire Dragon and Wind Blade.

A boom echoed out. The four colors swished out in four directions, transforming into four swords which stabbed toward Meng Hao.

Li Daoyi laughed maniacally. His left hand slapped his bag of holding, and eighteen black pearls appeared in his palm. He tossed them toward Meng Hao, and as they approached, they unexpectedly exploded. Distortions rippled out along with the explosion, causing the crumbling environment to fall apart even faster.

"Still think you're more ruthless than me?" Li Daoyi's expression was one of pure insanity.

The four coloured sword and the attacking distortion bore down upon Meng Hao's lightning mist. A massive boom exploded out, and Meng Hao shot backwards several paces. His eyes were filled with a ruthless light. His right hand lifted up, and another three hundred meter long Flame Dragon appeared in the air and flew, not toward Li Daoyi, but toward the glowing door up above.

"Making this place fall apart quicker isn't ruthless," he said coolly. "Destroying the exit... now that is ruthless. Do you dare to?" The Flame Dragon slammed directly into the glowing door, exploding. The already rippling door began to tear apart. Massive parts of it crumbled into nothing.

Seeing this, Li Daoyi, who had claimed to be incredibly ruthless, went completely wide-eyed. His heart began to pound.

# Chapter 134: Eighth Demon Sealing Hex!

Now that he had engaged Li Daoyi in battle, Meng Hao could tell that if he had a fourth Dao Pillar, then he would be able to end the fight quite quickly. Now, he desired more than ever to slay Li Daoyi.

But Li Daoyi's Cultivation base was at the late Foundation Establishment stage. Furthermore, he was a Li Clan Dao Child. He outclassed even Chosen, and would be difficult to kill.

More important than Li Daoyi, was the mastiff. So far the mask was not under the firm control of anyone. With Li Daoyi present, it was impossible to say when the struggle would end. And if Meng Hao wanted to aid the mastiff, he needed to get rid of Li Daoyi.

And his method... was to destroy the exit!

Below them were churning mists. The collapse of this world was increasing in speed. The vortex roared and grew larger. Soon, the dark green sacrificial altar was more than half sucked into it.

Meng Hao moved backward, flicking his sleeve. The lightning mist sprang up around him, and then shot toward the rapidly collapsing door.

Li Daoyi's expression flickered. He clenched his jaw, and a cold look appeared in his eyes. He waved his right hand, and the fan flew up, shooting toward the glowing door. A booming sound filled the air as the door cracked even more under the power of the attack.

After all the destruction, the only thing left of the door was a thirty meter patch. And that patch was rapidly falling apart.

"There's no way you are as ruthless as me," said Li Daoyi. "I don't believe that you'll sacrifice your life!" His body flashed as he shot forward. His right hand flickered an incantation, then gestured forward. Instantly, a yellow-colored talisman appeared behind him. It shot through his body, increasing in size exponentially as it shot toward the thirty meter wide door.

Meng Hao's eye glittered coldly. He slapped his bag of holding to

produce ten whistling flying swords. They simply could not withstand the power of Meng Hao's three Dao Pillars, and immediately exploded into pieces.

Amidst the reverberating boom, the thirty meter door shook violently as it disintegrated further. Now, only six meters were left. As for the green-colored sacrificial altar, it was almost completely sucked up by the whirling vortex. Now, the vortex began to rise up toward Meng Hao and Li Daoyi.

The entire Legacy zone was on the verge of complete annihilation. Cracks appeared on every surface, and an incredible, deafening roar filled the air.

Above them, the only exit was now growing smaller and smaller. At the moment, there was only three meters left. And yet, Meng Hao slapped his bag of holding again. Ten flying swords flew out. Li Daoyi's face fell.

If the swords exploded onto the door, the door, now less than a meter wide, would completely collapse. Li Daoyi suddenly thought that Meng Hao had really given up any hope of living, and was resigned to staying in this place forever.

But then Meng Hao flicked his wide sleeve, and he flew up into the midst of the swords. This made it seem as though he had given up on the idea of staying, and would leave. But as he left, he would destroy the door. Then, even if Li Daoyi acquired the Legacy of the Blood Immortal, then he would have no way to leave.

A conflicted look appeared in Li Daoyi's eyes. If Meng Hao did that, then getting the Legacy would be pointless. He was about to do something to block Meng Hao, but then he realized that anything he did would most likely send out ripples that would cause the weakened door to break apart.

"If I leave, the Legacy...."

He didn't want to be buried in this place. He was a Dao Child of the Li Clan. He had limitless prospects in the future. Losing out on the Legacy of the Blood Immortal wouldn't really change anything. But dying here....

“Compared to my life, the Legacy doesn’t count for anything. And who cares about some old Patriarch. Very well. But if someone else gets the Legacy, then they will be buried with it along with this place!” Li Daoyi’s eyes were red as he let out a howl. He leaped up, coughing out a mouthful of blood which splashed over him. He then transformed into a bloody shadow, which increased exponentially in size. He stretched up toward Meng Hao’s flying swords, reaching them, and Meng Hao, just as they were about to explode. He passed Meng Hao, and then shot into the door.

Even as he passed into the door, his right hand waved out, and ten black pearls appeared, ready to explode, smashing the door and cutting off Meng Hao’s escape route.

And yet, at the same time, as his right hand was still in the process of leaving through the screen, Meng Hao took a deep breath and then released a spell that he had been preparing for some time.

“Demon Sealing, Eighth Hex, Body Sealing!” His eyes were crimson as he uttered the words. This was the first time he had ever used the mystical art he had acquired from the Eighth Generation Demon Sealer.

After achieving intellectual enlightenment, Meng Hao had tried several times to use the spell, but had never succeeded. Then after the deep enlightenment from the magical text in the fifth matrix of the Blood Immortal Legacy zone, everything clicked.

Using his three Perfect Dao Pillars, his fingers flickering, Meng Hao had the intense feeling that he would succeed this time. The feeling had appeared earlier in his battle with Li Daoyi, and had continued to grow stronger.

His finger fell, and the entire world shuddered. And yet, it was not actually the world that had shuddered, but Meng Hao and his finger.

Tiny strands of intangible Qi appeared that seemed to be somehow connected to the collapsing world. They were everywhere, blended within the spiritual energy of heaven and earth, creating ghost images of the world. It wasn’t just Meng Hao and his finger that shook. In addition to the ghost images of the world, ghost images of Li Daoyi had also

appeared!

Li Daoyi had not passed all the way through the glowing screen. But now, his body began to tremble and... he stopped moving!

At the same time, the three Dao Pillars within Meng Hao rapidly grew dim; it seemed that as Meng Hao's technique took effect, it was using up almost all of the spiritual power he had.

Meng Hao's face grew pale. He waved his right hand, and the lightning mist suddenly spread out, surrounding the ten pearls that were just about to explode. At the same time, the two wooden swords flew out, heading directly toward Li Daoyi. As for the other flying swords, they lost their spiritual power, and then exploded, sending ripples out in all directions.

A moment passed, and Li Daoyi was beginning to recover. However, everything had happened so quickly, he was still just staring in shock. His body was already outside, but before he had a chance to do anything else, he let out a blood-curdling howl. He hadn't pulled his right arm through in time! In the blink of an eye, Meng Hao's wooden swords slashed it off!

Within the Legacy zone, Meng Hao's face was pale, and he coughed up blood. Everything around him was disintegrating and being sucked into the vortex. The lightning mist made a groaning rumble; it had successfully blocked the exploding attack of the ten pearls, but the glowing door rippled nonetheless, shrinking down to less than two meters in diameter.

Soon the lightning mist was so thin it seemed as if it might fade away; even the sparks of electricity were nearly undetectable. Meng Hao saw Li Daoyi escape, minus his arm, and sighed inwardly. Then he turned, and rushed over to the half-violet, half-red mask, inside of which the two Blood Divinities were attempting to consume each other.

At first, the red glow seemed to be winning out. But the instant Li Daoyi left, it suddenly became weak. Inside the mask, the Li Clan Patriarch trembled, his rage billowing up.

"Li Daoyi!!" he roared furiously. In the past, he had been a Cultivator, but now he was incarnated as a Blood Divinity. As such, he had no choice but to follow the only true rule of the ruleless Legacy zone!

The winner of the Legacy must have a Blood Divinity!

Similarly, a Blood Divinity must belong to a Legacy competitor! When a Legacy competitor departed, the Blood Divinity would vanish. Only upon the competitor's return would the Blood Divinity reappear.

However, the Li Clan Patriarch had already placed himself in the mask. He didn't disappear, and yet, because Li Daoyi had fled, he was now weakened. The glow which surrounded him began to fade.

Meng Hao approached. Ignoring the disintegrating and collapsing around him, he reached out, circulating his three Dao Pillars of his Perfect Foundation, causing all of the power of heaven and earth in the area to rush toward him.

The spiritual energy entered his body and then flowed into the mask, merging into the mastiff. With this assistance, the mastiff's violet glow grew brighter, pressing down on the Blood Dragon that was the Li Clan Patriarch, completely cutting off his path of retreat. In that instant, the mastiff's control of the mask exceeded half. And yet, it couldn't completely take it over. Still, the mask could not be taken away.

The Li Clan Patriarch couldn't be swallowed up so easily. Despite its dangerous position, it still continued to struggle fiercely.

"If you're impenetrably thickheaded, then the worst thing that could happen is we will all die today," rang out Meng Hao's voice. Everything around them rumbled thunderously, collapsing into pieces. The glowing exit door was barely more than a meter wide. "If you give in, and let my Blood Divinity take control of the Legacy mask, then I won't permit him to consume all of you. Some of your spirit can remain, and eventually the day will come when you can emerge and transform back into a person! The choice is up to you!"

"What makes you think I'll help you win!?" replied the cruel voice of the Li Clan Patriarch. "And what reason do I have to trust you!?" He knew the danger they faced, and also knew that refusing Meng Hao meant death. But he still didn't want to give in.

"You might not trust me, but you have no other options." Meng Hao's



eyes gleamed.

A moment passed, the space of ten breaths. The surroundings were beginning their final descent into destruction. The vortex was only three meters away from Meng Hao, swallowing everything up. Above him, the exit was barely a meter wide. A helpless roar sounded out from the Li Clan Patriarch.

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If you want a refresher on the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex, check out the surprisingly titled Chapter 102: Eighth Demon Sealing Hex

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# Chapter 135: Breaching the Volcano

As Meng Hao said, the Li Clan Patriarch had no choice but to trust him. If he didn't, he would inevitably die. Trust Meng Hao, and he had a chance at life. If he didn't trust Meng Hao, and Meng Hao left, he would have no chance whatsoever at a continued existence.

Even as Meng Hao spoke, the Li Clan Patriarch knew that his only choice was to stop resisting and allow the mastiff to consume him and take control of the mask. The mask flew into Meng Hao's hand. He grabbed it, and then shot out through the rapidly shrinking exit.

As he flew out, a booming rang out as the Legacy zone was completely swallowed up by the vortex, gone forever.

In the volcano, Meng Hao shot through the air in a beam of light, the blood lake and the altar trembling around him. The massive stone head collapsed into fragments that sank into the lake. Within an instant, the lake itself had dried up.

The only thing left was a crater in the ground, as if all of it had been a mere illusion.

Even as the lake dried up, thunderous booms could be heard from overhead. Meng Hao lifted his head to look at the sky above the volcano. Thunder and lightning filled the air like silver dragons. They formed an enormous mass, as if they desired to smash downward, but instead, were blocked by a blood-red glow. The blood red glow seemed alive, as if it wished to do battle with the Heavens.

It was so far away that Meng couldn't see it, but what he could see was that... the glowing shield at the mouth of the volcano was disappearing.

"All this strange celestial phenomena will definitely attract attention. I can't stay here!" Gripping the mask in hand, he shot toward Chu Yuyan, at the same time sending some Spiritual Sense into the mask.

It had been completely taken over by the mastiff, who was now the Weapon Spirit. Having completely swallowed up the possessed Blood

Dragon, the mastiff was now in a state of hibernation. The Li Family Patriarch's Cultivation base was incredibly powerful, thanks to his initial incredible strength, added to which was the power of the Blood Dragon he had possessed. Even though the mastiff, also a Blood Divinity, could consume him, he would need quite some time to fully absorb him.

Meng Hao had no idea how long it would be before it awoke from hibernation. However, he could only imagine what it would be like when it woke up and emerged. It no doubt would have incredible power, which of course would be of immense help to Meng Hao.

It was asleep for now, but belonged to Meng Hao. The mask too, completely belonged to Meng Hao.

Meng Hao's heart thumped, filled with anticipation. However, because the mastiff was sleeping, he was temporarily incapable of using the mask.

"How long will it sleep..." Meng Hao took a deep breath. Deep within the mask he also saw a tiny shred of the Li Clan Patriarch's spiritual consciousness. It was very weak, as if Meng Hao could exterminate it with the slightest thought. He considered for a moment, and then decided not to blot out it out.

Deep within the mask, he also saw a blood-colored book of scriptures. Next to the blood-colored book of scriptures was a flag with three streamers.

After a moment's examination, Meng Hao recalled his Spiritual Sense and placed the mask into his bag of the Cosmos. He landed next to unconscious Chu Yuyan, who was wrapped up in the black net.

Meng Hao looked thoughtful as he glanced up at the thunder and lightning outside the volcano. The bloody glow and the glow of the lightning interlocked within the sky. Determination filled his face.

"I can't stay here. I've got to get away. The Tribulation Lightning is here for me, but it's provoked a response from the Blood Immortal's sacrificial altar..." He flicked his wide sleeve to scoop up Chu Yuyan. Using the incredible power of his Perfect Foundation's Spiritual Sense, he examined the surroundings. He let out a cold harrumph. In various cracks and

fissures in the area, Chu Yuyan had hidden quite a few complete minor pills. He collected them together, then flew up and out of the volcano. This was the first time in half a year that he had been able to leave this place. Now that he was able to, his heart filled with anticipation regarding the future.

But the anticipation on his face quickly turned into shock. As he gazed off into the distance, he could clearly see a massive, ancient temple that had the appearance of a war chariot, currently in the midst of bombarding the heavens. Surrounding it were a myriad of figures emitting a shocking Qi, locked in combat with the lightning from the Heavens.

The Tribulation Lightning was shocking to the extreme. Even one bolt of it was enough to cause Meng Hao to fill with a feeling of dread that caused his pupils to shrink.

“So... this is the Tribulation Lightning sent after me?” His heart trembled. He could only imagine what would have happened inside the volcano if he hadn’t entered the Legacy Zone after consuming the Perfect Foundation pill. The Tribulation Lightning had attempted to break open the Blood Immortal’s Legacy Zone, and in doing so had provoked the Legacy, which sent the Ancient Temple of Doom into war. Had he faced it alone with his Perfect Foundation, he would have been completely destroyed.

Breathing deeply, Meng Hao shot away as fast as possible, grasping Chu Yuyan in tow. His scalp was numb, and he felt incredibly anxious. This was because he had noticed that the blood-red glow was beginning to fade, and the image of the Ancient Temple of Doom was growing indistinct.

Thankfully, the Tribulation Lightning was also beginning to disperse; there seemed to be only one volley left, and then it would be gone.

Actually, to flee to the world outside the volcano wasn’t really the best choice; but Meng Hao had no choice but to do so, and flee as quickly as possible. He knew that the Tribulation from the Heavens would attract widespread notice. Surely there were already many people in the surrounding areas; as soon as the Heavenly Tribulation ceased, the area

would be crawling with Cultivators. Under those circumstances, it would be very difficult to escape.

Only if he made his move now, would he be able to take advantage of the chaos.

Exactly as Meng Hao had suspected, the surrounding area was already filled with nearly a thousand Cultivators, who had been attracted to the area by the Tribulation from the Heavens. Of course, none of them dared to enter the area, instead choosing to watch from a distance. Now that the Tribulation was fading, their eyes began to glitter. It wasn't clear who went first; in an instant, all of them flow forward from all directions, filling the Tribulation zone.

Meng Hao was fleeing as fast as possible. He suddenly frowned, his eyes flashing. He stopped in his tracks, muttering to himself for the space of a few breaths. Then his eyes filled with determination.

"If I keep going, I'll definitely run into some Cultivators. Their first reaction will be to doubt me.... If I don't continue flying in this direction... Then I can do this!" He turned around. Instead of flying toward the border of the Tribulation area, he headed directly toward its center. This was opposite of his original direction.

He didn't fly quickly, however. And as for Chu Yuyan, he had long since deposited her into the bag of the Cosmos. It was not a bag of holding, after all, and its insides were an entire world. It was capable of temporarily holding a living person inside.

Meng Hao flew along, carefully observing his surroundings. After about the space of about ten breaths, his expression flickered. Ahead of him had suddenly appeared a group of about ten Cultivators. Like prismatic beams of light, they shot through the air toward him.

The group of ten split up. Three or four of them shot forward at top speed, their gazes fixed upon Meng Hao.

Their gazes immediately passed over him. He gave off the impression that he was doing exactly what they were, searching the Tribulation zone.

Currently, his eyes were fixed on the ground, not looking up toward them. Were it the opposite, they would have moved to bar his way.

It was at this exact moment that the Temple of Ancient Doom completely disappeared. As the bloody-red glow faded away, the thunder and clouds also began to break apart. But... there was one lightning bolt that did not seem willing to abandon its mission. Even as everything disappeared around it, it shot down from the sky, directly toward Meng Hao.

As it descended, it was clearly fading. However, it was still incredibly fast; it would without doubt fall onto Meng Hao.

When it landed on him, regardless of how minor the injuries, it would most definitely arouse the notice of the surrounding Cultivators. If they started to make speculations, then Meng Hao would definitely be in danger.

At the moment, the ten or so Cultivators were gaping in shock as the lightning bolt approached from the distance. They immediately began to retreat.

At this critical juncture, Meng Hao's mind was spinning. He suddenly let out a hearty laugh. Instead of retreating, he rushed forward. In a loud voice, he said, "So, there are some Tribulation Lightning aftershocks! Finally I, Wang, get some luck from the Heavens for me!"

Continuing to laugh, he charged onward. He waved his right hand, and instantly, the lightning mist appeared around him. Amidst the shocked gazes of the surrounding Cultivators, he shot directly toward the Tribulation Lightning bolt.

"Is this guy crazy?"

"He called himself Wang. Maybe he's from the Wang Clan?"

From their perspective, rather than seeing the Tribulation Lightning seek out Meng Hao, they saw him rushing toward the it. And this was exactly what Meng Hao wanted.

Boom!

A massive explosion radiated outward. The Tribulation Lightning slammed into the lightning mist surrounding Meng Hao. A rumbling roar rose up, and Meng Hao's body trembled. He coughed up a mouthful of blood, and within him, his Three Dao Pillars narrowly escaped being destroyed.

This was only one Tribulation Lightning bolt, that had been weakened by who knew how much. Furthermore, it had grown more and more weak as it descended down. Thankfully, it had occurred in this way. Meng Hao knew in his heart that he had gotten lucky. Without the Blood Immortal sacrificial altar, and without the Temple of Ancient Doom, the moment he had achieved Perfection, he would have perished.

As the Tribulation Lightning dissipated from Meng Hao's body, it turned into innumerable arcs of electricity, which were then absorbed by his lightning mist. It seemed the Lightning Flag had also been damaged by the Tribulation Lightning. However, it was now able to reinforce itself. The lightning glow increased in intensity, as if it had undergone some sort of baptism.

This left Meng Hao shocked, but he still managed to let out a loud laugh.

"I didn't come here in vain, after all!" he said, flicking his sleeve and laughing. "With the help of the Tribulation Lightning, my magical treasure has become complete! Excellent! Excellent!" With that, he shot forward, looking for all appearances as if he were seeking more Tribulation Lightning.

"Ah, this guy is refining treasures!"

"Refining treasures with Tribulation Lightning! This Wang fellow is really daring!"

"You were only looking at the treasure refining, you weren't looking at him. When the Tribulation Lightning hit him, it was like a baptism. For people who practice Thunder type Cultivation, this kind of thing is extremely beneficial!" The ten Cultivators charged onward, looking for more signs of Tribulation Lightning aftershocks.

# Chapter 136: Zhou Daya!

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever as the ten Cultivators passed him up. He continued to fly onward, although not as quickly. Soon, the other Cultivators were much further past him. His eyes flickered slightly. He didn't leave, but continued to follow them, looking exactly as if he were seeking the source of the Heavenly Tribulation and, like the rest of the others, more Tribulation Lightning.

"Why did that Heavenly Tribulation come?" said Meng Hao said in the same tone as the others. He looked very thoughtful as he asked, "What is there about this place that provoked it?!"

"Good question! I've never seen Heavenly Tribulation like that before. Don't tell me there was a person here facing the Tribulation? No one has done that since ancient times, although you can read about it in the ancient records..."

"Yeah, it's really weird..."

It was afternoon by the time the Tribulation clouds began to disperse. The midday sun shone over the land. Nearly a thousand people were scouring the area, but couldn't find any clues. Eventually though, they found the volcano.

Before anyone could enter it, three beams of light appeared overhead, each of them three hundred meters wide. Soon three people appeared. No one could see their faces clearly as they flew directly into the mouth of the volcano.

Even though the surrounding Cultivators couldn't see their faces, they could sense the powerful pressure they radiated. Only late Core Formation Cultivators in the False Nascent Soul stage could emit pressure like that.

Within the large group of people, Meng Hao's pupils constricted. However, he didn't bat an eyelid. Moments later, the three people flew out from within the volcano. Their eyes swept over the crowd, which allowed everyone to see their appearances clearly.



“It’s the Black Cloud Elders!”

“So, it’s them. They’re the honor guard of the Black Sieve Outer Sect....”

“This place is within the area controlled by the Black Sieve Sect, so for them to appear is nothing out of the ordinary. Now that they’re here, there’s really no point for us to be here....”

The three old Cultivators wore long black robes, upon which were embroidered flowery cloud shapes. After looking around, the three of them seemed to be lost in thought for a moment. Then, a voice rang out.

“This area is sealed. Leave this place!” They sat cross-legged in mid-air as one of the three produced a jade slip. He flicked his sleeve, and the jade slip transformed into a black mist which rose up into the sky.

Meng Hao lowered his head with a resigned look on his face, just like the surrounding crowd, then began to disperse along with them.

“So, it turns out this place is close to the Black Sieve Sect....” thought Meng Hao, looking off into the distance. Suddenly, he increased his speed, transforming into a prismatic beam and shooting away. His right hand slapped his bag of the Cosmos, and a jade slip appeared in his hand. He looked at it closely.

“Wow, the wind generated by that roc blew all the way to ... the Black Sieve Sect.....” Suddenly, an image appeared in his mind of that day back in the Reliance Sect when he had walked along with Elder Sister Xu.

“I wonder how Elder Sister Xu is doing?” he thought. He flew along for a few more days. After a while, he suddenly frowned. Spotting a location some distance away, he landed down next to a patch of forest.

His right hand slapped his bag of the Cosmos, and Chu Yuyan flew out. Her face was pale, and the instant she appeared, she looked at Meng Hao with cold eyes. She didn’t say a word.

His face calm, Meng Hao knelt down and ran his hands across her body. Of course, it was impossible not to feel the liveness of her figure. Her eyes widened and fury covered her face.

“What are you doing?!” she cried. But even as the words came out of her mouth, Meng Hao pulled his hand out from deep within the warmth of her robe to reveal four medicinal pills.

“These pills belong to me,” he said, tucking them away. He had long since guessed that Chu Yuyan had hidden away some of the Perfect Foundation minor ingredient pills that she had concocted.

Seeing him take away the pills, she let out humph. Her Cultivation base was now restored, but being tied up within the black net, she had no way to free herself.

“As we agreed, I’m going to let you go.”

Meng Hao looked down at her, then waved his right hand. The black net widened, and then flew off of her.

“I told you I would get you out of there, and Meng Hao never goes back on his word.”

Almost the same instant that Meng Hao took back the black net, Chu Yuyan’s eyes flashed with a strange light. Her Cultivation base was back at the mid Foundation Establishment stage, and now it seemed as if she were about to flash an incantation gesture.

Meng Hao looked at her indifferently, as calm as ever. Her heart sank, and she said nothing for a moment. A complicated expression appeared on her face.

“The enmity between us is settled,” she said, gritting her teeth. “But when we meet in the future, we will still be enemies. As for everything that happened in the volcano, you can never speak of it to anyone. If you do, I will be forced to kill you!” She hadn’t been awake for long, and didn’t know what had happened regarding the Tribulation or the Blood Immortal Legacy.

But as for her feelings toward Meng Hao, they were vastly different than what she had felt when she first met him. He looked like he was still at the early Foundation Establishment stage. But the way he stood there so calmly filled her with a powerful dread.

That dread was partly because of what she had experienced during the half year inside the volcano. The other was because of a feeling of imminent danger which rose up from within her heart.

She sensed that if she attacked at this moment, she would be doing something she would regret forever.

Her cold words having been spoken, she suddenly flew up into the air, transforming into a white beam that shot off into the distance. At the moment, she wanted nothing more than to get as far away from him as possible. The events of the past half year in the volcano were now complex memories that would never be forgotten.

Meng Hao watched her beautiful, slender form slowly disappear. He also thought back to the half year in the volcano. He thought about when her garment had been in rags, revealing her tender, snow-white skin and graceful figure.

He stood there smiling slightly for a moment, before coolly saying, "If you've seen enough, you can come out now."

His voice was met with only silence from the surrounding area. He lifted his right hand, and a three hundred meter long Flame Dragon appeared. Instantly, the entire area filled with blistering heat.

"No, no, no," said an alarmed voice. "Fellow Daoist, there's no need to get excited...." The voice came from the air not too far away. Suddenly, a shimmering figure appeared which then coalesced into a young man. He had a somewhat depraved look to him, and in his hand was a paper talisman. He looked nervously at Meng Hao.

The Flame Dragon's massive head was staring directly at him, its sinister eyes glowing. It seemed to be covering his every path of escape as it approached.

His expression as normal as ever, Meng Hao said, "His Excellency has been following me for a while, I'm curious as to his objective." His eyes flashed coldly, causing deep anxiety to well up in the heart of the depraved-looking Cultivator.

His Cultivation base was at the early Foundation Establishment stage. But facing up against Meng Hao, he felt an incredible pressure bearing down on him. This was especially so because of the three hundred meter long Fire Dragon that Meng Hao had summoned. His heart shook. From what he could tell, this Fire Dragon seemed to have the power of a Cultivation base of the late Foundation Establishment stage.

The Fire Dragon's appearance had basically locked down the entire area, forcing him to reveal himself.

"Sir, I am Zhou Daya from the Golden Frost Sect," he said, his face pale. He quickly held out his identification medallion for Meng Hao to see. "Fellow Daoist, please, please do not attack. I have no ill intentions. I just happened to see the flag you used to absorb the Tribulation Lightning. I was very excited, and followed you to see if I could have a chance to trade for it."

Having followed Meng Hao this entire time, of course he'd seen Chu Yuyan. He recognized her, obviously, and was shocked. He knew that Chu Yuyan was a Chosen of the Violet Fate Sect, and also Wang Tengfei's beloved and fiancé. And yet, he had just observed her wearing mens' clothing, which obviously belonged to the young man who now stood in front of him.

Seeing the complicated look in her eyes, and having heard what she said to Meng Hao, Zhou Daya of course had experienced countless speculations in his heart as to what was going on.

In fact, he had come to the conclusion that he must have just witness some form of adultery.... This in turn caused him to feel quite nervous. However, it also caused him to feel extremely excited.

"It's adultery!" he thought. "Two adulterers! If the Little Patriarch knew about this, he would be really happy. In fact, he might even give me some kind of reward."

"The Golden Frost Sect," said Meng Hao, gazing coldly at the depraved-looking Cultivator. He frowned. "Do you know Li Fugui?"

"Li Fugui?" said Zhou Daya, looking surprised. "Uh, you mean Little

Patriarch? Of course I know him! Everyone in the Golden Frost Sect knows the Little Patriarch.” From the expression Meng Hao saw when he looked into his eyes, it didn’t seem as if he was lying. Meng Hao felt a tug at his heart.

“How could Fatty have become a Little Patriarch?” he thought to himself. After a moment, his eyes fell to the paper talisman that Zhou Daya held in hand.

Zhou Daya’s heart flip-flopped. He hated to part with the talisman. But he forced himself to hand it over.

“Fellow Daoist, please don’t take offence. I, Zhou Daya, acted crudely today. Please accept my invisibility talisman as a token of apology for my indiscretion.”

Meng Hao eyed the invisibility talisman, sweeping it over with his Spiritual Sense. Seeing nothing out of the ordinary about it, he accepted it.

“The Golden Frost Sect is based in the State of Frigid Snow,” said Meng Hao coolly, his eyes narrow. “What brings you to this area?”

“The Black Sieve Sect didn’t participate in the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament,” he replied carefully. “Therefore, the Sect dispatched orders to myself and a few others to come here and investigate. Actually, we weren’t the only ones. There are people from various other Sects in the area as well. Not long after I arrived, I saw the Tribulation Lightning...” He seemed to be especially emphasizing that he was not alone here in the Black Sieve Sect region.

“Did your investigation produce any results?” asked Meng Hao placidly.

“This type of thing isn’t easy to investigate. Recently, the Black Sieve Sect has been distributing a lot of treasures to attract rogue Cultivators of the Foundation Establishment stage. After thinking about it for a while, I really think something is wrong with the whole situation.”

Meng Hao’s facial expression didn’t change. He looked at Zhou Daya for a moment, then without another word, flicked his sleeve and disappeared in a beam of light.

As his figure disappeared over the horizon, Zhou Daya's heart began to relax. He wiped the sweat from his brow. Standing in front of Meng Hao, he had felt incredible pressure bearing down on him, and had been careful to exercise extreme caution.

Now, he was extremely happy, and his eye shone brightly.

“Adultery! That guy and Chu Yuyan committed adultery! She was even wearing his clothes. Haha! I have to get back as soon as possible to tell Little Patriarch about it. This news is going to make him super happy.” Back in the Sect, Zhou Daya was somewhat of a gossip and loved to spread news. Having come across what he believed to be an excellent rumour, he immediately flew up into the air, heading back toward the Sect's established rendezvous point.

# Chapter 137: 10th Patriarch of the Wang Clan

A few days earlier....

The Southern Domain. The State of Cloudy Skies.

This nation existed in the centre of the Southern Domain. It encompassed a huge territory, vastly larger than the State of Zhao. Even in the Southern Domain, nations like this could be counted on one hand.

Within the State of Cloudy Skies, there were no Sects whatsoever. It was one of those uncommon nations that didn't have Sects. Instead, in this nation, there was a Clan. This Clan was named Wang. And this nation... was also named Wang!

Male members of the Wang Clan who were mortal and could not practice Cultivation became part of the royal family of the State of Cloudy Skies. Those who could practice Cultivation entered the Wang Ancestral Mansion.

As for Cultivators without the surname Wang, they formed auxiliary branches of the Wang Clan. It had been this way for generation after generation.

After Meng Hao consumed the Perfect Foundation Pill and emerged from the Blood Immortal Legacy zone, a sound could be heard. This sound came from the tenth mountain amongst the Three Thousand Forbidden Mountains within the State of Cloudy Skies. It was the sound of breathing.

The Three Thousand Forbidden Mountains of the Wang Clan were not connected. They were dispersed throughout the State of Cloudy Skies. Underneath each mountain was a wooden coffin. Only the most powerful members of the Wang Clan could, upon death, be buried underneath one of the Forbidden Mountains.

According to the legends, one of the Wang Clan Patriarchs from tens of thousands of years ago was buried in one of the Forbidden Mountains, although no one knew which one.

There were many deep secrets within the Wang Clan, many of which the five great Sects only had general information about. Clues could be found in the ancient records, but the Wang Clan secrets were just endless, and their history too deep. According to the legends, they came from the stars....

Right now, within the tenth mountain, was a world of crimson light, the glow of blood and of fire. Here was a boiling sea that it seemed could never be extinguished within ten thousand years. Deep within the recesses of this volcano was a red coffin.

The coffin had no cover. Resting inside was an old man. His face was covered with wrinkles, and his body was skinny and shrivelled, as if he had been dead for a very, very long time. And yet, no Death Qi whatsoever emanated off of the corpse.

In fact, his eyes slowly opened, and when they did, the peaceful sea of fire... suddenly began to move. It was not burning higher; in fact, the broiling heat seemed to reduce a bit.

“I feel... A Perfect Qi...” murmured the old man. His voice was extremely hoarse, as if he hadn’t spoken for a very long time. When he did speak, the entire tenth mountain began to rumble.

This rumbling immediately drew the attention of the elder members of the Wang Clan. Multiple figures suddenly emerged from within the Wang Ancestral Mansion.

These old Clan members’ faces were filled with excitement; based on their understanding, within the tenth mountain was one of their Patriarchs!

“Perfection....” said the person inside the coffin, his eyes flashing with a mysterious light.

When his eyes flashed, the roaring of the tenth mountain grew more intense. The group that had come from the Wang Ancestral Mansion all saluted respectfully.

“Prepare three thousand Rebirth Stones!” said the old man in the coffin,



his voice echoing out of the tenth mountain. “The time has come for me to reincarnate!” When they heard this, the group of old Clan members’ faces grew even more excited.

“At the peak of the Dao Seeking stage, I sealed my Cultivation base. At first, I thought that like members of the elder generation, I could only struggle on death’s door, gazing at Immortality and sighing, ignorant and unable to take those final steps. I couldn’t step into the stars, and return to my Clan members....” A slight smile appeared on the shrivelled face of the old man. The smile seemed to be filled with an intense, ghastly strangeness.

“But now... I have hope....” His smile grew wider, and his eyes shone even more powerfully.

“The legendary Founder of the Wang Clan passed down a truth of the Dao from generation to generation. He was born mediocre. But one year, he was able to wrest away someone’s Foundation Establishment, and thus tread the path of a powerful expert.... Then he became a legend.

“Now, a Perfect Foundation has appeared. I too shall tread the path of the legendary Founder. I shall wrest away Perfection, and then take the next step, Immortal Ascension!

“Except... this person’s Cultivation base is too weak. It’s not sufficient to sustain my Immortal Ascension. I must wait a bit longer, just wait a bit, wait....” Within the coffin, the old man’s smile grew more vigorous. Then, after a while, he closed his eyes. The sea of fire within the tenth mountain once again dared to rekindle its inextinguishable flames.

Several days later, underneath a seemingly endless, cloudless sky.

A bright, greenish beam of light shot through the air. This was Meng Hao, slicing through the sky. As for Zhou Daya, Meng Hao had known all along that the young man was following him, but let him go anyway. Of course, there were some things that he shouldn’t have heard, which Meng Hao prevented him from hearing. In any case, he was connected to Fatty somehow, so he’d let him go.

“It took a lot of Spirit Stones to concoct the Perfect Foundation Pill. I still

have some left, but not many....” Meng Hao frowned, examining his bag of the Cosmos and letting out a sigh.

“Before I entered the Cultivation world, I was running low on silver. After I became a Qi Condensation Cultivator, I was always running low on Spirit Stones. Now I’ve reached Foundation Establishment, but... I’m still running low on Spirit Stones.” His brow furrowed as his longing for Spirit Stones was once again kindled. Now that his Cultivation practice had reached this level, his need for Spirit Stones was even greater.

“And then there’s the poison of the three-colored Resurrection Lily. If I can’t dispel it, it’s going to be a real problem.” His frown deepened.

“Furthermore,” he muttered to himself, “even though I’m much more powerful now that I have a Perfect Foundation, I’m cut off from heaven and earth. I have no way to absorb spiritual energy... the only way to get it is by consuming pills. I can’t keep doing that forever...” But, he had been prepared for that. Given a second chance, he would definitely chose to consume the Perfect Foundation Pill.

“You win some, you lose some. It’s fair.” Meng Hao lifted his head. Smacking the bag of the Cosmos, he retrieved the blood-colored mask. A warm feeling filled his heart.

“Despite my current situation, at least I acquired the Blood Immortal Legacy. Now I just have to wait for the mastiff to wake up. Then everything will be a bit better.” His eyes shone with anticipation. He cast his Spiritual Sense deep into the blood-colored mask. He could sense the mastiff’s slumbering form. Though he had no idea when it might awaken, he could sense a powerful pressure emanating from it, a pressure which was continuing to grow more powerful.

“And then there’s this flag.” Meng Hao’s eyes flashed. His Spiritual Sense fell onto the dilapidated, three-streamer flag. His Spiritual Sense entered it, only to find that it was like an ocean. Compared to it, Meng Hao’s Spiritual Sense was incredibly small. He had no way whatsoever to do anything with it.

However, he was able to sense an incredibly might within it like that of

the Heavens; it seemed mighty enough to lay waste to heaven and earth.

“My Cultivation base isn’t sufficient.... Even though this treasure is somewhat broken down, it was still inside the Blood Immortal’s Legacy zone. It must be extremely valuable. When my Cultivation base is strong enough, I’ll be able to use it, and I’m sure it will be powerful enough to shock the Heavens.” Palpitating with anticipation, he withdrew his Spiritual Sense. It was then that he caught sight of the character written on the third streamer, Ji 季.

“Why does it have the character Ji on it? Is it a family name?” He thought about it for a bit, then focused his attention on the Scroll of the Blood Immortal Legacy. The instant he looked at it, he felt as if his head were about to be split in half.

To the average person, this pain would be excruciating, and difficult to bear. But to Meng Hao, it was nothing compared to the anguish he suffered during his poison flare-ups. His expression flickered somewhat, but as he focused on the splitting pain in his head, he caught sight of a special technique.

“Spirit Devouring Scripture!” Meng Hao’s heart trembled as the three blood-colored characters appeared in front of him and branded themselves indelibly onto his mind.

Meng Hao’s head began to thrum as it was filled with an ancient voice. It was impossible to say whether the voice was male or female. “If you Cultivate according to my scripture, you can wrest control of Spirit and blood and fuse them into your body. Refine them into a body of blood, Spirit of blood, a Blood Immortal, a Blood Dao!

“There are countless Cultivation methods in heaven and earth. The bloodline of my Legacy stretches back to the powerful first Founder. The bloodline contains his will, and can be passed on to tens of thousands of generations. When the bloodline is awakened in the descendants, they shall possess latent talent!

“My technique can be used to wrest away latent talent, and then sense the almighty will of the Founder. Refine the body, make the latent talent

yours. Some have even tried to bring the ghost of the Founder into the world, to destroy Immortals and devils!

“Practicing Cultivation according to the technique of my Legacy is an insult to the Heavens. But fear not ghosts and divinities; overturn the vault of the Heavens with the flip of a hand, lower your head to cause heaven and earth to mourn!” Slowly a scripture came to be branded onto Meng Hao’s mind. Then a vast amount of miscellaneous information about the mask poured into his head.

“I am the Blood Immortal. My whole life was spent battling the Heavens. I met defeat only thrice! I wrested Spirits away from heaven and earth. Because I desired to wrest away the bloodline of Ji, the Heavens shunned me and longed for my destruction. My body could be destroyed, but not my will!

“I was not willing to give in because of three defeats. Therefore, I created three techniques: the Blood Finger, the Blood Palm, and the Blood Death World!

“Descendants of the Legacy of my Dao, do not forget that you must wrest away the bloodline of Ji! Make the Dao of Heaven weep, and the earth mourn! Remember the techniques of the Blood Immortal, the Nine Killing Magics!

“Remember, the day your Dao is achieved, put on my mask and hoist the flag of three streamers. Defy the ancients, topple the Heavens!

“No face, no words; flames of war!

“Broken clouds, a blood rain which rises to the heavens!

“Send the spirit to the glorious devil tower!

“Forge the bloodline of the spirits into the nine deaths!”

Meng Hao’s body trembled and he opened his eyes. He was still flying through the sky, above a vast empty space, and barren mountains. His eyes continued to swim, and his mind echoed with the archaic voice.

“Wrest away bloodline, achieve success. The strength of the bloodline is

up to the glory of the Founder.... Wrested latent talent of the bloodline, can be refined into a body of blood... a body refined outside the body...

“No one person can hold the power of an entire bloodline. The blood of three generations is required to refine even a minor blood clone. If six generations of bloodlines are congealed, then a magnificent blood spirit can be achieved. If nine generations of blood, then the Great Circle of the blood spirit can be completed!

“The ancestors determine the strength of a bloodline. The stronger the past generations, the stronger the Blood Spirit!

“Thus, it becomes death. Nine bloodlines, nine experts. They become the nine deaths, nine deaths fused into one. This is... the Blood Dao!” Meng Hao panted, his mouth dry. At the moment, he was no longer flying. He had landed onto a barren mountain, where he now sat cross-legged, feeling the Spirit Devouring Scripture pulsing through his head.

This was the complete scripture, the full Legacy. But within the Legacy was something that filled Meng Hao with the reek of blood. He sat in thought for a long time before his eyes began to shine.

“No face, no words; flames of war!

“Broken clouds, a blood rain which rises to the heavens!

“Send the spirit to the glorious devil tower!

“Forge the bloodline of the spirits into the nine deaths!”

“There are four magics within....” Meng Hao was thoughtful for a while before looking down at the mask in his hand. The mask was completely featureless, with no eyes, nose, ears or mouth. As he looked at it, his hand began to grow warm, and his eyes shined. It seemed as if he were about to put the mask onto his face.

As the mask neared his face, it grew warmer, and began to squirm. A bloody Qi emanated from it. Just as Meng Hao was about to place it on his face, the copper mirror within his bag of holding suddenly let out a sharp sound that was like the call of a bird.

The birdcall entered Meng Hao's mind, and his heart trembled. The light in his eyes suddenly became clear, and he suddenly put the mask down. His eyes filled with a hard look.

“Are you looking to die, you incomplete spirit?!”

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# Chapter 138: Good Luck Charm

As Meng Hao uttered the words, his left hand flickered in an incantation gesture. He pressed a finger onto his solar plexus, and some blood from his Cultivation base seeped out of his mouth. This blood was very precious; Cultivators could only produce so much of it. But Meng Hao didn't hesitate. He wiped the Cultivation blood off of his lips with a finger, then pressed the finger onto the mask.

According to the Spirit Devouring Scripture branded onto his mind, this was a simple method to take control of the mask.

His finger sank inside, deep into the mask's recesses. It pushed very far back, into a distant corner. There, face gloomy and uncooperative, was the Li Clan Patriarch.

"Your will is weak!" cried the Li Clan Patriarch shrilly. "Therefore, the mask tried to bewitch you!"

Meng Hao's finger paused before the Li Clan Patriarch. His eyes were cold, and he said nothing. After a moment, he pushed down, causing the Li Clan Patriarch to let out a shrill, depressed groan. His body grew dim as he was pressed down; it seemed as he might fade away.

"In the outside world, I could destroy you countless times over with a single finger!" roared the Li Clan Patriarch furiously. Filled with stubbornness, he glared out with fading eyes. Meng Hao's finger paused, then slowly moved back. But then, just when the Li Clan Patriarch was heaving a sigh of relief, it pushed back down onto him.

Another miserable cry rang out, not depressed, but anguished. The Li Clan Patriarch's body wasn't just growing dim, it was now draining Blood Qi. He looked incredibly dismal. However, he continued to hold his head up and glare at Meng Hao's finger.

"Was I bewitched by the mask itself, or were you secretly guiding it?" asked Meng Hao coolly. "We're both well aware of what happened. These two finger attacks are punishment, and the repercussions have not disappeared. If it happens again, then I, Meng Hao, will be forced to break

our agreement and obliterate you from existence.” He pulled his finger back. The Li Clan Patriarch might look strong-willed on the surface, but was actually very perturbed on the inside. Fear lingered in his heart because of Meng Hao’s ruthless tactics.

Just now, he really had taken advantage of Meng Hao’s period of enlightenment regarding the Spirit Devouring Scripture. He had secretly used some special methods to influence the mask and try to get Meng Hao to wear it. Just when he thought he had succeeded, Meng Hao had come to his senses.

“This incomplete spirit is very strange,” said Meng Hao, glancing at the mask. “It’s not because of the Blood Divinity, there must be some other reason.” Having removed his finger, he squeezed some blood to drop onto the spirit of the Li Clan Patriarch.

As the blood descended, it turned into a blood mist, which then enveloped the Li Clan Patriarch. Miserable screams echoed out. Meng Hao’s expression was as usual. He pulled back his Spiritual Sense, allowing the Li Clan Patriarch to continuously wail inside the mask.

A part of the Legacy Meng Hao had acquired was a warning from the Blood Immortal. Now he knew that he should not put the mask on casually. If he did, he might lose himself. The Blood Immortal hadn’t even explained the origin of the mask, and it seemed to have countless changes within it.

However, wearing it had many advantages. Many of the techniques and magic of the Blood Immortal Legacy could only be used while wearing the mask. For example, the four great magics.

However, without a Core Foundation Cultivation base, the mask could not be worn under any circumstances.

That having been said, the techniques created by the Blood Immortal after his three defeats—the Finger, the Palm, and the Death World—did not require the use of the mask. Instead, they had been branded onto Meng Hao’s mind.

“Even though I’m the winner of the Legacy, I couldn’t control the power



of the mask just now. And yes that incomplete spirit could... The mastiff clearly took over the mask and became the Weapon Spirit, so how could the incomplete spirit have done it?" Meng Hao's expression didn't change, but this issue was certainly weighing on his heart. It was one of the reasons why he hadn't simply slain the Li Clan Patriarch.

Putting the mask back into his bag of the Cosmos, Meng Hao sat silently in thought. He looked around carefully, then took out the copper mirror. Holding it in his hands, he examined it carefully.

If it weren't for the noise from the mirror just now, Meng Hao most certainly would have put on the mask. He wasn't sure what would have resulted, but considering the warning of the Blood Immortal, he couldn't help but feel a bit of fear in his heart.

"The sound just now was just like the call of a bird...." He looked at the copper mirror for a while, and even sent his Spiritual Sense into it. But nothing happened, so after some time passed, he put it back. Then, he lifted up the good luck charm he had acquired from Patriarch Reliance.

He had studied it in the past to no avail. But this time, as he held it in his hand, he circulated his Cultivation base and sent some spiritual energy into. Suddenly, his eyes gleamed.

"So, it does have a function.... I wonder how Elder Sister Xu is doing nowadays. I haven't seen her for so many years, I wonder if she'll remember me?" An image coalesced in Meng Hao's mind of Xu Qing's cold demeanor as she talked about the Cosmetic Enhancement Pill. A warm look appeared on his face.

"It's been so many years...." Meng Hao slowly raised his head and looked off into the distance. A long time passed before he rose to his feet and flew off of the barren mountain, heading off into the distance.

Half a month later. A walled city within the Black Sieve Sect territory. A bustling city of Cultivators. A young man sat in an inn, dressed in long, black scholar's robes. He sipped from a cup of alcohol he held in his hand. Occasionally he would lift his head to look out the window toward the city center, and the towering black pagoda there that rose up into the

sky.

This young man's skin was a bit dark, but his demeanour was scholarly and refined. He had delicately chiselled features that, coupled with his scholar's clothes, truly gave him the air of a mortal intellectual.

He had a simple but elegant gait, with bright eyes that were filled with intelligence. His lips were pursed in a way that seemed to indicate he was not easy to approach.

This was none other than Meng Hao. He had arrived in this place a few days ago to confirm the widely spread rumours regarding the Black Sieve Sect.

He wanted to go see Xu Qing, but obviously couldn't just directly go looking for her. Instead, he figured he would take advantage of the gathering of rogue Foundation Establishment Cultivators called by the Black Sieve Sect. He wasn't sure exactly when the gathering was to take place, but he'd decided to come ahead to gather some information before making any final decision.

"I never imagined that there would actually be a Tower of Tang here...." he muttered to himself, his eyes sweeping over the black pagoda off in the distance.

Before, he had assumed that Towers of Tang only existed in the cities of mortal. But here one was, right in this city of Cultivators.

He looked quietly at the Tower of Tang for a while, then put down his cup of alcohol. In his hand appeared an ancient piece of jade, covered with cracks. It wasn't the Demon Sealing jade, but rather the good luck charm Meng Hao had taken from Patriarch Reliance.

He had studied it several times in the past but hadn't been able to determine its use. After establishing a Perfect Foundation, however, he had been able to reach some conclusions based on various clues.

"This good luck charm can actually shift a person's location.... it's like a random teleporter. Unfortunately, it's covered with cracks, and can only be used a few times." He turned the good luck charm over and over in his

fingers. By casting his Spiritual Sense into, he could sense it emanating its teleportation ability.

“There is no set teleportation destination. In other words, once used, the good luck charm could send me anywhere. I can’t just test it out randomly.” He glanced over the good luck charm again, then put it away. Considering his experience with the roc, he didn’t want to be taken anywhere beyond his control. Who knew what terrible situation he might find himself in?

As he sat in thought, more and more Cultivators began to fill up the inn. This place only sold one type of alcohol, brewed from bamboo. It didn’t burn in the mouth, but upon sliding down the throat, it let off a burning heat. Once in the stomach, it burned even hotter, causing the whole body to heat up. Such a feeling is hard to describe. If you liked such a feeling, then you would end up loving it; if you didn’t like it, you wouldn’t be willing to drink a drop.

Not far from Meng Hao, a group of Cultivators was conversing in low voices.

“Everyone’s being a bit more cautious than usual. There’s a lot of unfamiliar Foundation Establishment Cultivators around lately....”

“That’s right. They’re all rogue Cultivators, fishes and dragons mixed together. In fact, I saw a guy a few days ago who had intense killing intent. I think he must be a savage Cultivator from the Black Lands.”

“They’re all here for the reward posted by the Black Sieve Sect. The Black Sieve Sect really didn’t hold anything back. They’re offering Sieve Earth Pills. Those are one of the five most effective pills for the Foundation Establishment stage. It’s even said that Grandmaster Pill Demon from the Violet Fate Sect sings its praises. No one outside of the Black Sieve Sect can concoct it.”

“It’s not that they can’t, it’s that they’re not able. Each Sieve Earth Pill is inscribed with a talismanic seal. Regardless of person or Sect, if any attempts to concoct it, they will face the threat of extermination by the Black Sieve Sect.”

From their tone, it was obvious that they coveted the Sieve Earth Pills. In the midst of their discussion, someone entered from outside. It was a young man wearing a black robe. His expression was ice cold, and as he stepped foot into the inn, his gaze swept the crowd before he took a seat in the corner. He produced a chip of iron about the size of a finger nail, which he fiddled with as he sat there thinking, occasionally looking around the room.

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever. He lifted his cup to his mouth and took a drink.

He had been sitting there an entire day. Outside, the sun filled the sky with its glow. He had heard quite a bit about the Black Sieve Sect's gathering of Foundation Establishment Cultivators.

Anyone Cultivator of the Foundation Establishment stage could participate and receive a Sieve Earth Pill, regardless of background or heritage.

"Anyway, back to the point. What exactly is the Black Sieve Sect trying to accomplish? They're one of the dignified five great Sects of the Southern domain. Why are they gathering so many Foundation Establishment Cultivators? There's obviously something strange going on. To offer up Sieve Earth Pills shows that whatever it is, it's obviously incredibly dangerous!"

"Brother Sun, your information is a bit out of date. According to the rumors that I heard, the Black Sieve Sect discovered the site of an ancient battle field. They've already tried to search it a few times, but were resisted by some ancient spell. If they can get enough Foundation Establishment Cultivators to replace the eye of the spell, then they can break through. Obviously, it's incredibly dangerous."

"All of the rumors are just heresay. Ancient battlefields are always incredibly inauspicious. No wonder the Black Sieve Sect is offering up Sieve Earth Pills!"

Although their voices were low, and not very clear within the inn, considering Meng Hao had three Perfect Dao Pillars and could hold his

own against the late Foundation Establishment Stage, hearing the conversation of these individuals was not difficult.

A Perfect Foundation was a legend had not appeared for tens of thousands of years. Once he reached the mid Foundation Establishment stage, he would be a match for Dao Children of the various Sects and Clans.

That having been said, having a Perfect Foundation was very dangerous. This danger came when it came time to pass into Core Formation. During that time, the Heavenly Tribulation would be incredibly powerful, far more powerful than that of the Foundation Establishment stage. Meng Hao wasn't sure if he could pass through it. After all, if he hadn't been assisted by the Blood Immortal and the Ancient Temple of Doom, then he surely would have perished under the Tribulation Lightning.

"Well, Core Formation Tribulation is very far away. I can think about it now, but I shouldn't worry too much." Meng Hao took another drink from his glass. A warm, burning sensation filled his body. Meng Hao thought about the information from Shangguan Xiu's turtle shell, which described the Perfect Foundation and the Perfect Gold Core.

"I wonder, when I reach Core Formation, will I be able to refine a Perfect Gold Core? What will that be like?" He hesitated for a moment, then put the matter aside. However, he had decided that he would begin to gather the ingredients needed to refine a Perfect Gold Core.

Dusk was approaching, and there were few Cultivators left in the inn. Meng Hao was just about to get up and leave, when suddenly his expression changed. He turned his head, looking further back into the inn. There in the corner, was the black-robed young man. He was no longer frowning, but instead, was staring coldly at Meng Hao. A killing aura slowly emanated from him, surrounding him and transforming into what seemed like a mountain of corpses and a sea of blood.

"You have something I need," he said coldly, his eyes fixed on Meng Hao.

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If you're interested in previous appearances of the Tower of Tang, check

out Chapter 1: Scholar Meng Hao and Chapter 59: Unable to See  
Chang'an

# Chapter 139: Thunderclap Leaf

As his cold voice rang out, the black-robed young man stood up. He strode forward to stand in front of Meng Hao's table. He stared at him coldly for a moment, then sat down.

Meng Hao's expression was calm as he looked at the young man. He said nothing, instead raising the cup and taking another drink.

"You have a Thunderclap Leaf!" said the black-robed young man, looking at Meng Hao. He lifted his right hand revealing a chip of iron laying on his palm. It glinted and emitted a blackish green glow.

"This is not ordinary iron," he continued coolly, his bearing insufferably proud. "This is a treasure of wood-iron, birthed at the moment a tree was struck by lightning. It is especially sensitive to lightning-based medicinal materials, such as the Thunderclap Leaf. So, do you want to trade your Thunderclap Leaf?" He placed the chip of iron onto the table. The movement seemed ordinary, but as his hand moved, a glow burst out from his palm, which transformed into an arc of electricity that expanded out.

The young man was at the mid Foundation Establishment stage. As the arc of electricity spread out, his Cultivation base enveloped the area, including Meng Hao.

Killing intent slowly roiled out of him. It seemed as if Meng Hao were to even say half of the word "No," the young man would attack. His eyes glowed with coldness.

"Screw off," said Meng Hao indifferently, taking a sip of alcohol.

The instant he said this, the black-robed young man frowned.

"I haven't left the Black Lands for quite a few years. It seems people in the outside world have gotten really arrogant." A cold smile twisted the corners of his mouth as he slowly began to lift up his right hand. Meng Hao raised his head and looked at him.

As soon Meng Hao's eye met the young man, the young man's entire body began to tremble. The hand which he had begun to lift up instantly

stopped moving. He didn't dare to lift it any further. His heart began to beat quickly. Meng Hao's eyes were like two sharp swords which pierced his own. His heart thundered, and his head roared. His Spiritual Sense seemed unstable, and a Frigid Qi seemed to grow within him, causing cold sweat to cover his body.

No killing intent radiated from his eyes; instead, it was replaced by astonishment. The pressure exuded by Meng Hao had caused the black-robed youth's body to instantly become stiff.

All of this was caused by a mere look from Meng Hao. This young man was not a Cultivator of the State of Clear Skies, but rather a savage Cultivator from the Black Lands. To him, bloody life-and-death battles were commonplace, so he had a sort of intuition when it came to matters of life and death. In this instant, he had a strong feeling that the person in front of him was not a Cultivator at the early Foundation Establishment stage, but some savage Spirit who could swallow him whole.

The Frigid Qi multiplied, and cold sweat dripped down his forehead. His heart beat rapidly, and he even felt as if his Cultivation base were being suppressed. His face fell, and he didn't dare to move.

The entire time, Meng Hao looked completely calm. Even though the person in front of him had emitted a killing aura, and was at the mid Foundation Establishment stage, it wouldn't take very long to slay him. Meng Hao put down his cup of alcohol. The a final glance at the black-robed youth one last time, he rose, flicking his sleeve and leaving the inn.

As he left, the black-robed young man's eyes suddenly flickered. He turned to look at Meng Hao's departing figure, his heart still fluttering with fear. A moment ago, he had been completely and utterly suppressed. It was not battle magic that had done it, but pure Spiritual Sense.

"What kind of Cultivation base does this guy actually have?" thought the black-robed youth, his face flickering. "It looks like Early Foundation Establishment, but his Spiritual Sense exceeds mine exponentially.... And although I couldn't sense any killing intent, as soon as he looked at me, my mind began to tremble." As Meng Hao disappeared into the distance,



he suddenly stood up and began to walk after him.

“Fellow Daoist, please wait!” he blurted, “Sir, I am Lu Tao. Please, Fellow Daoist, hear me out.” He hastened forward, nearing Meng Hao. His attitude was completely different than from before.

“I’m willing to pay for that Thunderclap Leaf,” Lu Tao gushed as he approached Meng Hao. “If you can make yourself part with it, Fellow Daoist, I would be extremely grateful. Whatever you want for it, I’ll give, as long as I have it. Let’s talk it over.” The pressure exuded by Meng Hao was considerable, but the Thunderclap Leaf was very important to Lu Tao, so he really had no other choice.

Meng Hao frowned, ignoring Lu Tao and proceeding forward.

“Fellow Daoist, I beg of you. No matter how many Spirit Stones, magical items or medicinal pills, I’m willing to negotiate. If I don’t have what you want, I can think of a way to acquire it to offer in trade.” He watched as Meng Hao continued to walk off toward a relatively remote area. This caused him to be a bit nervous; he knew that he had started out on the wrong foot, so, fearful that Meng Hao might suddenly attack him, he decided not to say anything more to provoke him.

“Fellow Daoist... are you here for the Sieve Earth Pills of the Black Sieve Sect?” he asked resolutely. “Nowadays it’s not hard to get your hands on them, but to get away safely is a different matter. Fellow Daoist, if you’re willing to have a business discussion regarding parting with your treasure, I can refer you to a disciple of the Black Sieve Sect. This disciple has information about the Black Sieve Sect that outsiders could never know, it will definitely increase your chances of getting away safely with your Sieve Earth Pill.” As the words left Lu Tao’s mouth, Meng Hao continued walking. They were now in a remote, abandoned alley.

“Fellow Daoist, sir,” Lu Tao said with a forced smile. “I very much wish to acquire the Thunderclap Leaf. It’s very important to me. Is there anything you would be willing to trade for it?” His pace slowed a bit.

Meng Hao suddenly stopped and turned. He looked at Lu Tao. There was neither happiness nor anger in his expression.

“Take out your wood-iron treasure and let me see it,” said Meng Hao coolly. His eyes flashed brightly.

When Lu Tao saw Meng Hao turn, it startled him. Without a word, he produced the wood-iron treasure and offered it toward Meng Hao. The iron chip flew toward Meng Hao, who grabbed it out of the air. He sent some Spiritual Sense into it. Immediately, he was able to sense the Thunderclap Leaf within his bag of the Cosmos. It emitted an aura of lightning that the iron chip absorbed. The iron chip then began to glitter.

“So, he’s not lying,” thought Meng Hao. “But, the whole thing seems a bit too coincidental.” He now knew that Lu Tao had used the iron chip to track him down because of the Thunderclap Leaf. But given his cautious personality, he still had some doubts.

“I do happen to have a Thunderclap Leaf. If you want to trade, then you’ll need to give a clear explanation of what you plan to do with it.” He waved his right hand, tossing the wood-iron treasure back to Lu Tao.

The Thunderclap Leaf was something that Meng Hao had acquired from Patriarch Reliance. And in fact, he had acquired not just a leaf, but an entire tree. It had been protected by a restrictive spell cast by Patriarch Reliance. However, Meng Hao wasn’t sure of its exact use. All he knew was that the Lightning Flag could be used to envelop and protect the Thunderclap Leaves.

“Well....” Lu Tao hesitated a moment, looking at Meng Hao with a hint of irritation. Finally, he gritted his teeth and continued. “Sir, I have a life magic that can be refined from stone from the Lightning Fringe Mountains. In order to release its full power, I have spent the past few years searching everywhere for various Lightning element items. However, none of them can compare to the Thunderclap Leaf. It’s just that Thunderclap Leaves are very rare, so when I sensed yours, I was too eager, and accidentally offended you.” In order to prove the reliability of his words, he pressed down on the pit of his stomach; an electric flow emerged from his mouth, which then transformed into a fist-sized rock. The rock was black, and its surface was encircled with arcs of electricity as well as tiny plant-like vines that resembled rattan.

“So, what was that you were saying about the Black Sieve Sect?” said Meng Hao coolly.

“I can help you find someone from the Black Sieve Sect,” he gushed. “They don’t usually interact with strangers. If you pay this person a little bit, you can find out the reason why the Black Sieve Sect has arranged the gathering of Cultivators.

“Fellow Daoist, if you’re willing to trade me your Thunderclap Leaf, then I can take you to a secret meeting with me tonight. There will be about seven or eight other Fellow Daoists there, along with a prestigious member of the senior generation to act as host. Not only can you trade magical items, you can also trade information.

“One of the people there is a Black Sieve Inner Sect disciple.

“Fellow Daoist, please believe me. Nowadays, the State of Clear Skies has a bunch of dragons and snakes all jumbled together. There’s good people and bad people all over the place. Cultivators from all sorts of Sects and Clans are here. Furthermore, there are many factions within the Black Sieve Sect. Of course there will be conflicts between them. Therefore, news is bound to spread. It’s normal. Of course there’s sure to be some bad information, but if all the information was fake, then no one would believe anything. So of course there will be some good information out there as well.

“You really will have to make your own judgement about that, and to trust your intuition.”

“Let me think about it for a bit,” said Meng Hao, his face the same as ever. “If I make a decision, I’ll notify you.” It was impossible for anyone to tell what he was thinking. He threw a jade slip to Lu Tao, who was about to continue to try to persuade him. Before he could, Meng Hao left the alley, walking quickly away and soon disappearing. Lu Tao had no choice but to watch him leave. But then, his eyes began to shine.

“The Constellation Priest of the The Black Lands Sect sure charges an arm and a leg, but what he said was mostly true. I really was able to sense the Thunderclap Leaf in this place.... But now that I’ve found it, I have to

think of some way to get it. Of course, since I infected this guy with my Qi Parasite, he'll never be able to get away from me!

“With the Thunderclap Leaf, I can refine the legendary Woodless bug!” He held the jade slip in hand, his eyes glittering. Of course he hadn't explained to Meng Hao the true details of how he planned to use the Thunderclap Leaf. Lost in thought, Lu Tao turned and left.

What he hadn't noticed was that behind him was an invisible phantom figure, in whose hand was a flying insect about the size of a finger nail. It was trapped, unable to fly. The figure stood a short distance away from Lu Tao, looking at him coldly. As Lu Tao left, the figure followed him.

This phantom was none other than Meng Hao, who had left, but had returned shortly afterward. He was using the invisibility talisman to secretly follow Lu Tao through the dark, starry night. Occasionally Lu Tao would take out the jade slip Meng Hao had given him. His face was gloomy as he eventually reached what appeared to be an ordinary mansion within the city. He knocked three times on the door, which then automatically slid open. Ripples seemed to spread out from the door as he entered.

After enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, Meng Hao saw four or five more Cultivators approaching. It was hard to tell whether they were men or women, but they were all of the Foundation Establishment stage. One was even of the late Foundation Establishment stage. Their faces were wrapped up, and they hurried along to the mansion, using the same method as Lu Tao to gain entrance.

Meng Hao's eyes glittered. With the twist of a finger, he crushed the bug in his palm, then ripped up the talisman that concealed him. He flicked his sleeve, changing into a new set of clothing. He donned a wide bamboo hat and then covered his face with a cloth mask. Then, he walked toward the mansion.

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If you want a refresher about how Meng Hao took the Thunderclap Leaves, re-read Chapter 85: Ancient Demon Sealing Jade (although be

aware that Patriarch Reliance calls these leaves by a different name)

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# Chapter 140: Don't You Know the Rules?

Meng Hao approached the mansion, lifted his hand, and knocked three times on the door. The door open inwardly without a noise. Inside, everything was pitch black. There seemed to be some kind of black-colored shield in place.

Looking at it, Meng Hao could see magical ripples on its surface, but nothing that indicated it would attack him. It was simply designed to control which Cultivators could enter. Meng Hao observed it for a moment, thinking back to the several people who had arrived before him. He quickly understood.

“This prevents anyone other than Foundation Establishment Cultivators from entering.” His face calm but covered by the bamboo hat, he strode forward into the shield.

Within the space of a few breaths, a soft glow appeared, shining into his eyes. He now stood outside of what appeared to be the palace of a mortal prince.

The palace was grand and imposing, like some enormous creature lying prone on the earth. It had a very solemn air to it. Outside the palace stood an old man wearing a Daoist robe. His expression was placid, and his Cultivation Base was at the late Foundation Establishment stage. When he saw Meng Hao, he approached, eyes shining.

He looked Meng Hao over and then quietly said, “Please produce your invitation slip, Fellow Daoist. If you have no invitation slip, then your Sect identification medallion will do.”

Meng Hao's eyes flickered beneath his bamboo hat. Without a word, he waved his hand and a medallion flew forward to land in the old man's hand. The old man looked at it, and suddenly a look of respect appeared in his eyes. He handed the medallion back with two hands.

“So, you're from the Violet...”

Meng Hao coughed, and the old man stopped talking. Without another

word, he stepped back with a slight bow, allowing Meng Hao to continue.

Meng Hao took the medallion back and strode past the old man into the palace. The medallion was the same one he had taken from Ding Xin. This was his second time going under an assumed name, and he was a bit more use to it this time.

He knew that this place would be a jumble of dragons and fish, quite chaotic. If they were really strictly checking the identities of the participants, then how could it be called a secret meeting? Having observed the outside for some time to analyze the situation, he now felt calm and unhurried.

Upon entering the palace, he saw ornamental rock displays and streams over which arched dark green, wooden bridges. Not too far away was a pavilion, surrounded by musicians playing stringed instruments. The sound they produced was remarkable. Seven people were seated within the pavilion. Most of them maintained quite a bit of space from the others. As could be expected, they sat silently, sizing each other up.

When Meng Hao entered, their gazes all came to rest on him.

Three of the seven people wore masks. One of them was Lu Tao, who was sitting there frowning. His gaze passed over Meng Hao briefly.

Two others had not covered their faces. One was a woman who looked like a lady, and appeared to be about thirty years old. She wore splendid garments, and was quite good looking. She had an alluring look in her eyes that exuded charm. She looked at Meng Hao for a moment, then smiled and nodded.

Last, was a middle-aged man wearing a long, yellow robe. A lonely expression covered his face, and he held a flagon of alcohol in hand, which he constantly drank from. He gave Meng Hao a quick glance with eyes heavy from alcohol.

The features of the four others present were all concealed by masks. It wasn't even possible to tell if they were men or women.

Without batting an eyelid, Meng Hao entered the pavilion and selected a

table to sit at. Looking around, he saw that there were only nine tables within the pavilion. Including his, eight of them were now occupied.

Obviously, the final table was reserved for the host, and not any other Cultivator.

After some time passed, a large man entered the palace from outside. He was at the mid Foundation Establishment stage. He was big and tall, so much so that it would have been useless for him to try to conceal his identity. He strode into the pavilion, cold and haughty.

As soon as he entered, he stopped in his tracks. His brow furrowed as he looked around.

“This is not the first time I, Xu, have joined this secret meeting,” he said coolly. “Today I came with an invitation, and yet, there’s no place for me. Which of you Fellow Daoists doesn’t understand the rules?” He smacked his bag of holding, and instantly a blue-colored jade slip appeared. Its surface was inscribed with a character: “Secret.”

The jade slip glowed softly. With a smile, the young lady lifted her delicate hand to reveal her own jade slip, which she placed on the table in front of her.

Next Lu Tao followed suit, along with some of the others. Soon, only Meng Hao and one of the other disguised Cultivators had not produced a jade slip.

One of the other two was emanating the power of the late Foundation Establishment stage. This person sat there calmly, completely ignoring the large man. Not daring to say anything, the large man’s eyes came to rest on Meng Hao and the other person. Both of them were only at the Early Foundation Establishment stage. The large man’s eyes glittered coldly.

“You two. If you can’t show me a jade slip, then you can just get the hell out of here. Give me a seat. If you don’t, then you won’t be leaving this place alive.” His voice was filled with killing intent, which transformed into a coldness that filled the area. The rest of the people in the pavilion continued to look on with various expressions. None of them seemed willing to interfere; apparently they had no qualms whatsoever about



observing a magical battle to the death.

Meng Hao said nothing, and neither did the other disguised person.

Everything was quiet within the pavilion.

The large man surnamed Xu snorted, and then strode, not toward Meng Hao, but to the other person, who happened to be a bit closer to where he stood.

His eyes shining brightly, he was about to raise his right hand when suddenly, a light cough could be heard. It echoed throughout the pavilion, and as it did, everyone inside, including the hulking Xu, turned their heads.

An old man wearing a long, yellow robe entered. His face was placid, and his body seemed to be somewhere in-between illusory and real. He didn't seem to be moving quickly, yet within three or four steps was already inside the pavilion.

"Salutations, Fellow Daoist Qingshan."

"Greetings, Fellow Daoist Qingshan." The instant the old man appeared, everyone with the exception of Meng Hao, instantly stood up. Meng Hao's expression flickered, and then he, too, stood and clasped hands in salute to the old man.

"There's no need to be so formal," said the old man coolly. "All of you are heroes of the current generation in the Southern Domain. I am merely here to host this secret meeting. Please proceed." He sat down at the ninth table and looked at the assembled people, his eyes bright and shining. Finally, they came to rest on the large fellow surnamed Xu.

Being gazed upon by the old man caused him to lower his head respectfully. Meng Hao did the same. This old man was a Foundation Establishment Cultivator, but was clearly beyond the late Foundation Establishment stage. He was halfway to entering Core Formation, so he would be classified as a False Core Cultivator.

A person like this in the State of Zhao would have a position higher than Grand Elder. His presence made Meng Hao a little bit nervous, but also led to some guesses about the whole thing.

“Fellow Daoist Qingshan,” said the hulking Xu nervously. Bracing himself, he said, “I invite you to take charge of justice. I bear an invitation, and yet someone here has stolen my position.” He clasped hands and gave a deep, respectful bow.

“Who stole your position?” asked the old man lightly. His gaze was like lightning as it casually fell onto Meng Hao.

“This person!” cried the hulking Xu, raising his hand and pointing at the other disguised Cultivator.

That cultivator gave a cold harrumph. From the clear ring of the voice, it was obviously a woman.

“That is my personal guest,” said the old man, speaking neither fast nor slow, as if the affairs of these Cultivators was beneath his interest. “She could not have stolen your position.”

Hearing this, the hulking Xu gaped for a moment. But then, his gaze swept over to Meng Hao. A cold light appeared in his eyes. Since one of the two people was invited, that left only one without a jade slip. This must be the person who stole his seat.

Everyone was now looking at Meng Hao, even the woman who had just humphed coldly. She looked over at Meng Hao with icy eyes.

Beneath his wide, bamboo hat, Meng Hao’s expression was the same as always.

“Anyone who comes to this place has the qualifications to attend the meeting,” said the old man placidly. “However, if you do not have an invitation slip, then you must wait outside the pavilion. When the time comes to conduct business, you may only place bids if everyone inside the pavilion has renounced claim.”

“So, it was you who stole my place,” said Xu. “You don’t know the difference between life and death! There’s no need to get up. If I don’t tear you to pieces today, then I’ll become a laughingstock.” Xu had an irritable personality to begin with. Having his seat taken away in front of everyone had long since stoked his killing intent. His body flashed as the power of

the mid Foundation Establishment stage exploded out of him. He charged directly toward Meng Hao.

No one moved to interfere. Even the old man just watched coolly.

When he was about three meters away from Meng Hao, he lifted his hand, causing a massive magical palm to appear and descend toward Meng Hao. Meng Hao sat there just as before. He simply lifted his left hand and waved a finger toward the hulking man.

When he waved his finger, the spiritual energy of heaven and earth within the entire palace was thrown into chaos. At the same time, the hulking man's expression changed. He suddenly felt as if he had lost control of his Cultivation base, and was now completely suppressed.

This caused the pupils of the surrounding Cultivators to constrict, including old man Qingshan. Meng Hao's right hand waved, and instantly, a roaring, three hundred meter long Flame Dragon appeared. Xu screamed as it shot down into his body.

His entire body shook violently. A look of disbelief and shock covered his face, and then despair. His skin burst into flame. A great wind buffeted him, slamming him into the ground. In the blink of an eye, his stalwart frame was reduced to bits of ash that drifted in the air.

The only thing left was a bag of holding. It flew up and into Meng Hao's hand. He patted it lightly, then produced a jade slip upon which was inscribed the character "Secret." He placed it on the table.

"Here is my invitation slip," he said. The others couldn't see his expression, as it was hidden by the bamboo hat. They could only hear his raspy voice coming out from underneath it.

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If you forgot the first time Meng Hao impersonated Ding Xin, you can read about it in Chapter 69: Young Lord Ding

# Chapter 141: The Cosmetic Cultivation Pill Appears Again

The pavilion was completely silent. Xu's death was quick and clean, which caused Lu Tao's eyes to narrow. Fear filled his heart as he looked at Meng Hao, who sat there looking quite dignified.

It wasn't just him. The well-dressed lady gave Meng Hao a penetrating look, and in her heart, she realized that this was not a person to provoke.

The middle-aged man with the flagon of alcohol stopped drinking for a moment; his eyes narrowed and filled with a sharp look. The disguised Cultivator of the late Foundation Establishment stage slowly lifted his head to look at Meng Hao. Hesitation seemed to blossom in his heart as he tried to analyze Meng Hao's Cultivation base.

As for the woman who was in disguise, she glanced at Meng Hao for a moment, and then looked away.

"If there are no further disturbances, then we can begin our secret meeting," said old man Qingshan slowly. He looked at Meng Hao with a friendly expression. "All of you made contact with the Secret Trade Alliance in the State of Clear Skies. If you do business here, I can serve as a witness. You can proceed without any reservations. If any problems occur, the Secret Trade Alliance will take responsibility. Now, I would like to invite all of the Fellow Daoists to begin business." He spoke in a tone you would use with people of the same generation. Actually, Meng Hao's actions just now had not just caused the others to be frightened. This old man was somewhat in awe of him too.

When he finished speaking, he flicked his sleeve, and a copper furnace inlaid with eight golden dragons flew out. It landed directly in the center of the pavilion.

"Fellow Daoists," said Lu Tao, clasping hands in salute to the others, "please allow me to go first this time." He waved his right hand and a jade slip appeared, which then flew into the copper furnace that old man

Qingshan had just placed in the middle of them all.

“This is a list of all the items I’m willing to trade today. There’s also a portrait inside. Fellow Daoists, if any of you see this person in the coming days, please send me a message with the information. I will repay you with a chunk of stone from the Lightning Fringe Mountains.” He said nothing more.

After this, the well-dressed, beautiful lady gave a slight smile and produced a jade slip. Without a word, she sent it into the copper furnace. The items she required as well as could offer for trade were all listed in the jade slip. Anyone who was interested would contact her.

This secret meeting was really just a small-scale hosted trade session. After all, most of the participants were not locals, and needed to be prudent when dealing with strangers, especially in business. Thus, the Secret Trade Alliance came to be. They would organize similar meetings throughout the Southern Domain, all presided over by a third party who could bear witness.

Soon, it was Meng Hao’s turn. He thought for a moment. He actually wasn’t sure exactly what was going on, but he pulled out a jade nonetheless. After branding it with some Spiritual Sense he tossed it into the furnace. He had left a single message inside; what was the Black Sieve Sect up to, and how dangerous was their invitation?

It didn’t take long for the eight participants to place their jade slips into the furnace. Old man Qingshan lifted his right hand and flashed an incantation gesture toward the furnace. A droning sound arose, and within the furnace an intangible flame came into being. The jade slips inside began to melt, and as they did, the eight golden dragons on the surface of the copper furnace began to squirm as if they were alive. Mist poured out from them, instantly beginning to envelop everyone present.

Meng Hao’s heart flip-flopped. Although he didn’t resist, he maintained the utmost vigilance.

After the mist had completely covered him, everything grew quiet. Ahead of him, he caught sight of eight glowing globes of light; it was as if

he had been separated into his own area away from everyone else. Information began to pour into his mind. There were lists of dozens of available medicinal pills, magical items, and miscellaneous goods, as well as various descriptions of items desired for purchase.

Soon, Meng Hao's eyes began to glitter. Pulling back his Spiritual Sense, he touched one of the glowing lights. Instantly, the information from the jade slip he himself had just prepared appeared in his mind. Now he understood. After perusing the information from his own slip, his attention was drawn to the very last glowing ball.

Inside was a portrait. When he saw it, Meng Hao laughed coldly to himself.

The portrait in the jade slip was of himself. Furthermore, the desired item was a Thunderclap Leaf.

"So, in this so-called secret meeting, you can ask for anything you need. This method is pretty good. You can confidently ask or offer things that you normally couldn't. If you strike a deal with someone, you won't know who it was you were dealing with.

"It seems there are two others who, like myself, want information about the Black Sieve Sect." He sat there cross-legged, waiting, sure that someone would contact him eventually. As he waited, he sent his Spiritual Sense out to examine some of the other glowing lights.

Suddenly, a white light appeared out of nowhere within the mist. Meng Hao's eyes narrowed. He touched it, and a message appeared in his head.

"I don't know very much about matters regarding the Black Sieve Sect, only a smattering. But what I do know is accurate. For my news, I require five hundred thousand spirit Stones."

Meng Hao frowned. When buying information in a place like this, one had to consider whether or not the information was true. It would be hard to determine.

Just then, another white light appeared. Meng Hao took hold of it, and another message appeared in his mind.

“There are several rumors floating around regarding the Black Sieve Sect. I have some news from the Inner Sect. Whether or not it’s true, you’ll have to decide for yourself. If you want this news, you will need to pay seven hundred thousand Spirit Stones.”

“This is my first time doing business like this,” thought Meng Hao with a frown. “I don’t have any experience, and I’m not sure how to trade. Furthermore, regardless of whether the information is good, the price is very steep. I don’t have very many Spirit Stones at the moment.” Ignoring the messages, he continued to examine some of the other glowing lights. He found that many of the lights had been updated with more details, or had prices increased or reduced. Suddenly, the copper mirror within his bag of the Cosmos grew hot. A moment later, the heat disappeared.

Meng Hao gaped in shock. He pulled out the mirror and examined it closely. He couldn’t find anything all that different about it. Lost in thought, he placed it back. Then, he continued to examine the items for sale within the glowing lights.

Soon, his eyes began to shine as he gazed at one of the glowing lights. Of the multiple items inside, one stuck out to him.

“Classic of Time.....” This item stuck out to him because within the glowing light, its name was somewhat dim. It hadn’t been there before, but rather, had seemingly just appeared. It seemed that if Meng Hao’s Spiritual Sense wasn’t currently higher than that of the mid Foundation Establishment Stage, then he wouldn’t be able to see it. It appeared to be cloaked by some mysterious technique, visible only to the Spiritual Sense of the late Foundation Establishment stage.

“The Classic of Time has a total of three volumes. Together, they describe Time refinement, which can in turn produce the magical Time Sword! I’m making the first volume available here. If you’re interested, please contact me.”

Meng Hao’s eyes narrowed. As he continued to examine the information, his eyes grew brighter. At the moment, there were quite a few requests floating about regarding Foundation Establishment Pills. He ignored them,

as he was completely focused on the introduction to the Classic of Time.

“... and Time is then produced. Lives are nothing.... The magic of this sword can produce varying results.... Three of these swords can produce powerful magic, nine, an even more consummate magic, and with eighteen, Time can be slain!

“Mystical trees can be used to forge the Time Sword. Because of their ancientness, such trees contain the vicissitudes of Time. They include the Spring and Autumn tree, the Missing Breath tree, and the best of them all, the Spiritualization tree. If none of these three are available, the mystical Thousand Times tree can also be used....” Meng Hao’s eyes flashed. He retracted his Spiritual Sense and took a deep breath, a thoughtful look in his eyes. He was very interested in this Time Sword, because he already happened to have a Spring and Autumn tree.

A moment later, Meng Hao lifted his hand toward the glowing light. Instantly, a white glow shot out and circled around his hand. He branded a message onto it, then sent it toward the glowing light. It disappeared.

It didn’t take much time for the white glow to fly back to him. As soon as he touched it, some text appeared in his mind.

“Since you could see the information about the Classic of Time, it’s clear you have the required Cultivation base. However, I only have one of the volumes. Acquiring the other two volumes will require us to work together. There is one more person present who is willing to do so. If you wish to join us, then our chances will of course increase.

“If you plan participate in the Black Sieve Sect’s activity in this land, then you must swear a Dao oath not to reveal our information to anyone, including your Sect. Inscribe your Dao oath onto a jade slip and send it to me. With that, your share will be guaranteed.”

Meng Hao thought for a moment before his eyes shined with determination. He lifted up a jade slip and placed it between his eyebrows. After a moment, he sent it into the white light, whereupon the jade slip disappeared along with the light.

Some time passed, and Meng Hao’s eyes watched with shining eyes as



several white glowing lights appeared. Scanning them with Spiritual Sense, he found the message he had been waiting for.

“One year ago, the Black Sieve Sect found a secret map. The map depicted a secret path to an ancient Blessed Land. The Black Sieve Sect has entered the place several times in the past year, but they have reached a standstill outside of a precipice. This precipice can only be entered by Foundation Establishment Cultivators.

“Those who enter must meet the demands of the Black Sieve Sect. The more objects they bring back from within, the more Sieve Earth Pills they will be given. Our meeting place is within this ancient savage land, where the shadows cast by the sun and the moon intersect.

“That is approximately ten days from now. You must quickly make your way to the Black Sieve Sect and join the group of rogue Foundation Establishment Cultivators they are gathering.”

Meng Hao frowned. As the white light disappeared, a look of deep thought appeared in his eyes.

“The information available nowadays in the State of Clear Skies is all over the place, so it’s impossible to say whether or not this information is true or false. However, most of it seems to involve some sort of ancient battleground or Blessed Land.

“It seems a lot of intelligent people have investigated and come to various similar conclusions. The State of Clear Skies belongs to the Black Sieve Sect. To say that the chaos within the nation doesn’t directly have to do with the Sect is ridiculous.

“However, that Sieve Earth Pill would definitely be of help to me....” Meng Hao had learned quite a bit about the Black Sieve Sect matter from this secret meeting. However, the more he learned, the more suspicious he became.

“I have to go,” he thought, having come to his decision. His Spiritual Sense swept over the rest of the glowing lights. He was just about to call it back when suddenly, his pupils constricted. Despite being sitting cross-legged, a strong spirit suddenly surged out of him. He stared fixedly at the

same glowing light that contained the information about the Time Classic. A new item had just been listed for sale inside, a medicinal pill.

The name of the pill was “Cosmetic Cultivation Pill!”

Cosmetic Cultivation Pill. It was a common pill, and not very expensive. Among all the various pills, this was not one to catch anyone’s attention.

However, to Meng Hao, this pill contained memories from six or seven years ago. Memories of a beautiful scene underneath the moonlight.

“I never could have guessed that I would see a Cosmetic Cultivation Pill in this place,” said Meng Hao with a sigh. He payed the price for the pill, and soon a glowing white light carried it over to him. The pill landed in his hand, and when he saw it, his entire body shook with surprise.

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If you forgot about the Cosmetic Cultivation Pill, you can read Chapter 12: Hello, Elder Sister Xu and Chapter 37: Water and Ink in the Evening

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# Chapter 142: Black Sieve Sect

As Meng Hao's body trembled within the mist, his eyes began to emit a powerful glow. Even his breathing grew rapid. His Cultivation base rotated rapidly, causing the mist to seethe.

Meng Hao didn't notice any of that, though. He was staring intently at the Cosmetic Cultivation Pill and something that was etched onto its side: a mountain.

The mountain had obviously been etched by someone's hand, not with magic. This was not a famous type of medicinal pill. It was ordinary. The etching was sentimental....

The mountain depicted was something that people outside of the Reliance Sect wouldn't know about. It was the East Mountain of the Reliance Sect!

The shape of that mountain had been branded into Meng Hao's mind, and he recognized it immediately.

Who would possibly have placed this image of a mountain onto this Cosmetic Cultivation Pill, which would then show up in the State of Clear Skies...? A clear image suddenly appeared in Meng Hao's mind.

It was a beautiful, cold woman wearing white clothing. She had brought Meng Hao into the Cultivation World. Under the moon, she had glanced back at him.... Xu Qing.

Elder Sister Xu.

Meng Hao could not prove conclusively that this Cosmetic Cultivation Pill was the one he had given to Elder Sister Xu as a gift. But his intuition was telling him that it was.

He held up the pill in his hand, slowly closing his fist over it. He sat there quietly. Beneath the wide bamboo hat, a storm began to brew on his face.

"If she never used this pill, and even took it with her to the Black Sieve Sect, then... why is it here now? What has happened to her in the Black

Sieve Sect? This is a picture of the East Mountain. Does she miss... the Reliance Sect, or does she miss a person...?

“What does this picture of the East Mountain mean? Did she give this pill to someone? Or did she sell it? The person I was just interacting with could not have been her.”

He loosened his grip and looked again at the etching on the side of the pill. His heart suddenly filled with a strong desire to see Elder Sister Xu. Deep inside, the answers to his questions existed already.

“Elder Sister Xu....” A sharp look glowed in his eyes and he took a deep breath. This pill told him that if she didn’t sell or give away the pill, then the only other possibility was....

He felt a stab of pain in his heart, and his eyesight grew blurry. In his mind was the image of Elder Sister Xu from all those years ago. So long ago. He slowly put the Cosmetic Cultivation Pill into his bag of the Cosmos.

“The Black Sieve Sect.... And then there’s this Classic of Time....” Meng Hao slowly lifted his head, staring at the glowing lights in front of him. This was not a place where he could attack; it was impossible to tell what would happen if he did anything impulsive. He didn’t want to beat the grass and startle the snake, thus putting his enemy on guard.

He thought for a bit more, and then his eyes filled with determination. His mind was now made up; he would definitely go to the Black Sieve Sect.

Meng Hao was in no mood to participate in the rest of the secret meeting. He kept thinking about the image of Elder Sister Xu from all those years ago. When the meeting finally came to an end, he let out a light sigh. The mist around him dissipated. Old man Qingshan nodded to the group and waved his hand. Then he turned and left. Those who remained in the pavilion didn’t stick around to talk. One by one, they disappeared, randomly being teleported away. Such methods were making the Secret Trade Alliance more and more popular.

When Meng Hao reappeared, it was outside the gate of another mansion within the city.

This location was halfway across the city from the place where he'd followed Lu Tao to. Meng Hao had already ascertained that the palace he'd been in was not located within the city at all. The place he'd followed Lu Tao to was merely an entranceway.

He walked down the moonlit street, looking up into the sky. His long, lonely shadow stretched out on the ground, seemingly filled with bleakness.

The moon above was the same, but the location was different. It seemed like years had passed since the previous day. Looking back in time, it seemed as if he had no place to call home.

He sighed and walked onwards.

He continued to walk until the sun rose, and then walking until he left this city of Cultivators. Finally, his body transformed into a prismatic beam which shot through the State of Clear Skies toward the Black Sieve Sect!

Several days later.

The Black Sieve Sect was located in the east of the State of Clear Skies, in the middle of the Hundred Thousand Mountains. Its main gate was vast and mighty. Its majesty would strike awe into the heart of any Cultivator who looked upon it.

The Hundred Thousand Mountains surrounding it served as a foil to the ninety-nine mountains within their center. Above these ninety-nine mountains floated a massive mountain, upturned to create something that was almost a continent. On its underside, willows draped down, some a few dozen meters long, others hundreds. Clouds curled up around this massive land, giving it a truly celestial feeling.

Richly ornamented buildings, pagodas and temples covered it. Beneath it, the ninety-nine mountains were all connected with colorful arching bridges. It was unsurprisingly beautiful.

Gurgling water dripped off of the ragged rocks on the bottom of the floating mountain, making this Sect a place of indescribable beauty. The

faint sound of bells filled the air, creating an incredibly serene air.

The highest peak of the floating mountain seemed to stretch up to the Heavens. It was there that for generations had existed an enormous incense burner. Three massive burning joss sticks stood up straight within the incense burner. They seemed inextinguishable, as if their fragrance would last throughout all eternity. Their smoke rose up into the sky to eventually be transformed by the wind into wisps like willow branches, and then dispersed.

These were the lands of the Black Sieve Sect.

In fact, if the Black Sieve Sect wanted to, it could claim the surrounding Hundred Thousand Mountains as part of the Sect. After all, it was one of the five great sects of the Southern Domain. Its Dao Reserve was profound, and its Sect techniques tens of thousands of years old.

The spiritual energy here was very thick. In fact, the spiritual energy in the surrounding Hundred Thousand Mountains was thicker by far than any of the Spirit mountains within the State of Zhao. Any single mountain here had spiritual energy thicker than the valley where Meng Hao had reached Foundation Establishment.

This was especially true within the Thousand Mountains; there existed spiritual energy so thick that even the mortals who lived in the region had increased longevity. From birth, they breathed in the spiritual energy, and didn't need to practice Cultivation to increase their lifespans.

Within the Hundred Mountains, it was even more astonishing.

A young man stood outside the Hundred Thousand Mountains. He wore a black robe, and his face was filled with a lofty and proud look. "The Hundred Mountains of the Black Sieve Sect," he said coolly, "is where only qualified members of the Inner Sect may practice Cultivation. In fact, the Thousand Mountains are far superior to many so-called Spirit mountains in the world."

Standing around him were five Cultivators, all of them gazing at the Black Sieve Sect. Each one wore different clothing, and had obviously come from different areas. One in their midst wore a scholar's robe. His

skin was a bit dark, but he had a scholarly and refined disposition. It was none other than Meng Hao.

“The Ten Thousand Mountains are for guests. However, my advice to you, Fellow Daoists, is to not lightly tread into mountains other than the one assigned to you.” The young man smiled as he looked at the five of them. “There are many fierce beasts sealed in the area. Furthermore, there are certain mountains which are reserved for special use, and are guarded by Inner Sect disciples. If you charge into one of those areas, you might not come out alive.”

The young man smiled as his gaze passed over them.

“Fellow Daoists, you all responded to the call of the Black Sieve Sect. Now that you are here, you are guests of the Sect. You will stay within the Ten Thousand Mountains, one person to a mountain. Everything you need to practice Cultivation has been prepared for you. Upon entering your mountain, a disciple from the Black Sieve Sect Pill Mountain will deliver a Sieve Earth Pill to you.

“This pill is a welcoming gift. However, I, Zheng, must remind you, taking the pill, entering the mountain, and signing your fingerprint signifies that you are entering an agreement. If you renege on your promise, or secretly leave, then you will be punished by the Black Sieve Sect.” With a smile, he cupped hands and bowed.

Nearby, five Black Sieve Outer Sect disciples waited to receive them.

“Seems fair,” said one of the five Cultivators, an old man in a gray robe. The others voiced their agreement. Meng Hao said nothing as he gazed off into the endless mountains.

“Very well then. Fellow Daoists, you should not have very long to wait until we begin. Quite a few others have arrived already.” The young man smiled and bowed again.

Within Meng Hao’s group of five was a middle-aged man with a sallow face. “How many Fellow Daoists of the Foundation Establishment stage have come already?” he asked suddenly.

“Not counting you ladies and gentlemen, there are already ninety seven.” The young man surnamed Zhen nodded, then turned, transforming into a beam of light that shot off into the distance.

“Fellow Daoists, please follow us. We will take you to your respective mountains.” The group of five young disciples, who obviously were from the Outer Sect, cupped hands and saluted respectfully, then led the way.

The person leading Meng Hao was a young woman of about twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age. Her Cultivation base was at the seventh level of Qi Condensation. She was pretty, and had an intelligent air to her.

“Sir, please, follow me,” she said softly. Although Meng Hao’s skin was a bit dark, he was cultured and refined. He had the air of a scholar, which wasn’t common among Cultivators. This caused the young woman to take more than a few glances at him.

What was especially alluring was his clear eyes, deep within which seemed to glint a bit of Demonic power. For a young, impressionable girl like her, being gazed at by Meng Hao made her blush.

“Sir...” she said, lowering her head.

“Lead on,” he said with a slight smile. Seeing her reminded him of the Reliance Sect, and of Xu Qing. He looked off at the endless mountains of the Black Sieve Sect, and stubbornness glinted within his eyes.

The young girl led Meng Hao to a tall, emerald green mountain. On its top was a residence and a courtyard. Rattan vines wrapped around everything, and a limestone path wound its way around the mountain. The wind blew, causing the spiritual power to curl up and about. The entire scene would cause anyone’s spirits to rise.

Upon reaching the courtyard, Meng Hao produced a pearl head-ornament from the bag of holding he’d acquired from the man named Xu, at the secret meeting. He gave it to the young girl, then sent her off. She left, her face flushed, glancing back repeatedly at Meng Hao. Her heart seemed to be quite abuzz.

Soon, the sky began to darken. As night approached, everything was



silent. The only thing that could be heard was the chirping of insects which drifted in from outside. Meng Hao sat cross-legged on the second floor of the building, meditating. Suddenly, his eyes opened.

It was at this moment that the silence outside was suddenly broken by a blood-curdling scream. It sounded like the struggles of someone in the throes of death. The silence was ripped to pieces as the screaming filled the air.

# Chapter 143: Ghost in the Night

Meng Hao stood in front of the second-floor window. The moon hung in the sky. Off in the distance, he could see a mountain covered with rippling spells that looked like a fine gauze.

The miserable cry was coming from that mountain. At the moment, multiple figures could be seen flying up from various surrounding mountains to see what was happening.

Soon, several prismatic beams shot toward the mountain. Not long after, the ripples in the spells faded away, and everything returned to how it had been moments before. Everything was quiet.

Meng Hao frowned, and his eyes flashed. He remembered that mountain from which the scream had emanated was the same mountain that the sallow-faced man had gone to earlier that day. Having seen the figures emerge and fly toward the mountain, Meng Hao was about to go investigate, but then paused suddenly.

His face flickered as he looked down at his bag of the Cosmos. He slapped it, and the Demon Sealing Jade flew out, which he grabbed.

It shimmered, emanating a mysterious glow. A very strange feeling rose up in Meng Hao's heart. He couldn't put his finger on what it was, but it seemed as if there were some invisible Qi prickling at his heart.

Thoughtfully, he took out the jade piece left by the Eighth Demon Sealer and placed it in his palm.

The archaic voice of the Eighth Demon Sealer rang out in his mind. "Some spirits in the cycle of reincarnation avoid burial. Their Qi seems Demonic, and yet not. They are above living creatures, but infected with the tens of thousands of variations of the mortal world. The Qi is serene. Consumed by bones and spirit, they can lead the way to the path. If you encounter such Qi, you must seal it!"

Meng Hao thought for a moment, and eventually decided not to leave. He stood next to the window, casting his Spiritual Sense out toward the

direction where the bloodcurdling scream had come from. The first thing he heard was quarreling voices.

“This is the sixth fellow Daoist to die. If the Black Sieve Sect doesn’t provide an explanation right now, then we will leave!”

“That’s right. We responded to your call for the sake of a Sieve Earth Pill. If people were dying in battle, then very well; but recently people have been dying miserable deaths in the middle of the night! Then you seal the area up and don’t allow anyone to investigate. It’s very strange! Of course we have questions!”

There were about ten Cultivators near the mountain, staring coldly at the Black Sieve Sect Cultivators who were preventing them from investigating the scene of the death.

In the distance, no small amount of Cultivators had flown out from their respective mountains and were watching from a distance. They said nothing, but all of them were exuding the power of their Cultivation bases. A great pressure rose up, transforming into a sort of voiceless revolt.

The Black Sieve Sect disciples’ faces all turned very unsightly. It was at this moment, however, that a gravely voice suddenly sounded out.

“The Sect will offer an explanation within three days.” As the voice rang out, an old man wearing a wide Daoist robe appeared. The pressure exuded by his body caused the surrounding Cultivators’ faces to change.

The Black Sieve Sect disciples all bowed.

“Greetings, Elder Chen.”

The old man strode forward. He stood below them at the foot of the mountain, and yet the Foundation Establishment Cultivators floating in the air above him were all silent. Many of them offered respectful bows. They obviously knew who this old man was.

Meng Hao stood at the window, his expression the same as ever. However, a slight frown slowly appeared. The old man was an Elder of the Black Sieve Sect, and his Cultivation base was not at the Foundation

Establishment stage, but Core Formation.

His gaze swept over the gathering of people. When he spoke, his voice wasn't very loud, and yet it filled the minds of everyone in the area. "I very much appreciate that you all were able to come to the Black Sieve Sect. In regards to the killings that have occurred in the past days, I too am quite furious regarding this matter. Within three days, I will slay the killer with my own hand."

"With Elder Chen present, we are much more at ease. Thank you, sir, for administering justice." The Foundation Cultivators bowed one by one and then returned to their respective mountains. An Elder of the Black Sieve Sect had appeared; although he hadn't offered an explanation, how could they possibly continue to argue about the matter?

Soon, everything was quiet again. Elder Chen departed, as did most of the Black Sieve Sect disciples. The mountain from which the scream had sounded out was also quiet. No one was willing to make further attempts to go investigate.

Looking pensive, Meng Hao returned to sit cross-legged and meditate. Within his mind echoed the words of the Eighth Demon Sealer.

"There's something strange going on in the Black Sieve Sect...." Meng Hao's eyes opened, filled with an intense glow. The prickly Qi that he felt seemed to be growing thicker.

He lowered his head for a moment, thinking. Then he took out the Blood Immortal Legacy mask. Sending his Spiritual Sense inside, he saw the Li Clan Patriarch, enveloped by Meng Hao's blood mist. He seemed to be growing weaker lately. He no longer cried out like he had before; he didn't seem to have the strength.

"What do you know about the Black Sieve Sect?" Meng Hao asked through Spiritual Sense. He'd always found the old man's Blood Spirit identity to be somewhat strange. The feeling was even stronger when he thought of Li Daoyi.

"I know dog farts, you little son of a bitch," said the Li Clan Patriarch, his hoarse voice full of venom. "If you had any skill at all, you..."

Before he could finish speaking, Meng Hao calmly cut his finger and used a drop of blood to surround the old man in more blood mist. A miserable cry could be heard, and then Meng Hao retracted his Spiritual Sense. He asked no more questions, instead putting away the mask.

Meanwhile, underneath the Black Sieve Sect's Ten Thousand Mountains, was an enormous network of limestone caves, like a giant labyrinth. Deep in its recesses was a tall platform adorned with burning torches. The dancing torchlight filled the place with flickering shadows.

Atop the platform, three old Cultivators sat cross-legged. Their bodies were withered, and as they sat there, they almost looked dead. A strong Death Qi swirled around them. And yet, their eyes were open, and gleamed with ancient, nether-worldly light.

Their figures seemed to twist and warp, as if they existed somewhere between the physical and the corporeal, and not completely within the world.

Situated in the middle of them was a hide. It appeared to be made from the skin of some wild beast. Its edges were tattered, and on its surface was some sort of map.

The hide map appeared to be slowly wriggling. Standing atop it was the phantom image of a man, who at the moment was letting out a soundless scream. It looked like the ghost of a middle-aged man, his face sallow. This was one of the five people who had arrived with Meng Hao.

His body started to get blurry, and soon disappeared. When it did, the edges of the hide slowly expanded a little, and the hide became a bit more glossy. It was a scene that anyone observing would find incredibly strange.

Some time passed, and then one of the old people spoke in a hoarse, scraping voice: "Under the moonlight tomorrow, it will consume another person. Then we can begin."

"This time, we must succeed, no matter what. We must...! We must acquire that legendary item. Not just for us, but for the Patriarchs. Then we can all awaken. We will no longer have to conceal ourselves in this realm of darkness, this empty place with no land to step foot upon."

“There still aren’t enough Foundation Establishment pups out there. We spread the news far and wide, but the Sects and Clans aren’t easily fooled. Hmph.”

“It can’t be helped. These Foundation Establishment pups are just a part of the whole. With everything else we’ve prepared, we will definitely succeed this time.” The sound of their voices slowly faded away. Soon the only movement was that of the wriggling hide, placed in between them like some sort of object of worship.

The night passed uneventfully, and soon dawn broke. Meng Hao opened his eyes from meditation. Outside his residence, he saw a beam of multicolored light approaching. It turned into a woman wearing a black gown. She was tall and slender, with fair skin and beautiful hair that draped over her shoulders. She slowed as she approached, coming to a stop outside Meng Hao’s residence.

“Disciple Han Bei of Black Sieve Sect Pill Mountain has been dispatched to deliver you a Sieve Earth Pill,” she said. “Fellow Daoist, can you please come out?” She had an intelligent voice and a smile as beautiful as a flower in bloom. Her presence seemed to make everything brighter. Her eyes were alluring, her smile white and lovely. She wore a long, emerald-green gown, trimmed with violet embroidery. Overall, she had an otherworldly look.

Meng Hao emerged, and they sat at a table.

She looked at Meng Hao, her smile unchanging. As she did, her eyes seemed to grow brighter, although whether this was done consciously or subconsciously was impossible to tell.

“Fellow Daoist, may I ask your honored name?” she asked with a slight smile. Her voice was as pleasant as the call of a lark. Listening to it could be described as a pleasure.

“Meng Hao,” he replied coolly, making no attempt to conceal his identity. Looking at the woman in front of her, he could tell that her Cultivation base was extraordinary. It seemed to be at the early Foundation Establishment stage.

“Meng....” Han Bei looked at him in shock for a moment. She studied his face and then laughed. “So, you are Fellow Daoist Meng. This here is a contract. Would you please mark it with your thumbprint? Then I can give you your Sieve Earth Pill. Afterward, if you follow all the requirements laid out by the Sect, then you will get a second.” She lifted her delicate hand. Around her wrist was an emerald green bracelet. A glow flashed off of it, and within her hands appeared a paper scroll. She handed it to Meng Hao.

His expression the same as ever, he looked at her bracelet for a long moment, then accepted the scroll. He looked it over, then lifted his right thumb and left a mark on the paper.

Han Bei gazed at him the entire time. After he placed his thumbprint on the paper, she produced a jade box the size of a hand and placed it off to the side.

“Here is your Sieve Earth Pill. Please note, the pill cannot be consumed during the daytime. After all, its full name is Moon Sieve Mother Earth Pill. When you consume it, it will drink in the moonlight.” She smiled, then rose to her feet to take her leave.

Before she could depart, Meng Hao suddenly said, “Have we met before?”

His words caused her to stare at him in shock.

“I don’t recall ever seeing you before, Fellow Daoist Meng.”

“My mistake,” he said. “I took you for someone else.” He frowned as if he were thinking deeply. Han Bei laughed. With a final nod, she transformed into a beam of light and departed. As she left, her smile turned into a thoughtful look.

Meng Hao picked up the jade box containing the Sieve Earth Pill. After heading back into his residence, he opened it. Inside was a medicinal pill about the size of an infant’s hand. It was white, and wrapped in a wax seal. Despite that, a thick medicinal aroma wafted off of it, as well as rippling spiritual energy.

“Actually, one of these pills is enough for me. But, I can’t casually

consume it. I need to test it out to see if it's real or fake.” He put the jade box away, then closed his eyes and continued to meditate.

Time slipped by, and soon it was late at night. The moon hung brightly in the sky, and everything was quiet. Outside of Meng Hao's mountain, however, a shadowy figure appeared noiselessly. It was very strange in appearance, like a rippling piece of hide. A closer look revealed that the person's features were none other than the sallow-faced middle-aged man who had passed away.

His eyes shone. He looked around at the surrounding mountains, then selected Meng Hao's. His body flashed, and he floated up toward Meng Hao's residence.

As he approached the residence at the top of the mountain, Meng Hao, who was sitting cross-legged meditating, suddenly lifted his head. His eyes glittered brightly.

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Han Bei's name in Chinese is 韩贝 hán bèi – Han is a common surname. Bei means “shell”.



# Chapter 144: A Figure in the Crowd

Meng Hao gave a cold snort. His right hand slapped the bag of the Cosmos, and the two wooden swords appeared soundlessly. Next, a talisman dropped into his hand, and his body became invisible.

It was then that the figure of the sallow-faced man floated to the mountain top. All the vegetation he passed on his way withered up, as if the life had been sucked out of it. The limestone path turned into ash, and it seemed as if the entire mountain was encircled with a dense Death Qi.

However, no one outside of this particular mountain had any clue that this was happening.

The figure floated up to the outside of Meng Hao's residence. Not pausing for a moment, it passed directly through the wall into the second floor.

He floated there underneath the moonlight, his listless eyes flickering. A strange demonic air emanated from him. Everything around was quiet as the sallow-face man looked around the second floor with his menacing eyes.

Meng Hao hadn't moved even a centimeter. He sat cross-legged, invisible, looking at the figure in front of him. Naturally, he instantly recognized him. However, his appearance was very strange, as if something were wrong with him. Meng Hao thought back to the bloodcurdling scream from the mountain the previous night. That was where the sallow-faced man had been.

He already half-understood what was going on.

"This person is dead, and has been turned into an automaton. Or perhaps someone used some Spirit Puppet arts on him to control him...." Suddenly, his body flashed as he moved to the side about three meters.

There was a boom as the furniture near where he had been sitting all transformed into ash. The sallow-faced man, his eyes shining with a strange glow, charged toward Meng Hao, as if he could see him.

Meng Hao's eyes flashed. Ripping up the invisibility talisman, he lifted his right hand and flashed an incantation gesture. The two wooden swords flew directly toward the figure in front of him. The figure didn't even attempt to dodge. Both wooden swords flew directly through, leaving two holes, from which no blood flowed. It was as if the sallow-faced man was made of only skin, with nothing else inside.

If there were nothing more to it than that, it wouldn't be a big deal. But then, the holes that had been punched in his body began to merge together. They transformed into a large mouth, which suddenly ripped off of the sallow-faced man's body and shot toward Meng Hao, ready to consume him.

Meng Hao's facial expression didn't change. He retreated backward, his hand flashing an incantation gesture. Then he waved forward, and a Flame Dragon roared into being, rushing toward the figure. As it neared, the figure didn't attempt to dodge, but instead charged forward and consumed the flame dragon.

It turned its head to look at Meng Hao, its lips twisted into a hideous grin. Then it threw itself toward him.

Meng Hao frowned, both hands flashing incantation gestures as they pushed forward into mid-air. A multitude of flying swords appeared. Instantly, they shattered into pieces, turning into a cloud of shrapnel which shot forward with incredible force. Like a tornado, it sped toward the sallow-faced man. At the same time, the two wooden swords circled back toward the figure, radiating sharpness. They stabbed directly toward it's head.

They were followed by the black net, which Meng Hao had just tossed out.

Popping sounds rang out as the flying sword shrapnel ripped the figure almost completely in half and the wooden swords stabbed into its head. But the figure... despite being horrifically injured, still looked at Meng Hao with the half face it had left, and smiled. It tried to rush toward him again, but was enveloped by the black net. Its body writhed as it attempted to

squeeze through the gaps in the net.

Its body appeared to be emitting some kind of suction force, which caused the second floor to shake as if it were about to be sucked into the figure.

“Can’t kill it... because it’s not really alive. No wonder it’s killed so many Foundation Establishment Cultivators.” With a frown, Meng Hao watched the figure trying to lurch toward him, its eyes filled with fierce coldness. Meng Hao lifted his right hand and flashed an incantation sign, then pointed down to the ground.

“Demon Sealing... Eighth Hex, Body Sealing!” He lifted his hand up from the ground and pointed at the broken figure in front of him.

The entire building, the entire mountain shook. Although, they weren’t actually shaking. It was only an illusion. Meng Hao’s body and his finger were what was really shaking. In Meng Hao’s eyes, the entire world seemed to congeal together. Then, multiple ghost images of the world appeared, one on top of another.

The building and the mountain were there in the illusion, and as for the figure, a ghost image appeared of it as well!

For the first time, a look of surprise and disbelief appeared on the figure’s face. It seemed as if its mouth were shaping to cry out, but before it could, the ghost images of the world fell upon it, binding it up. It couldn’t move at all.

At this moment, Meng Hao stepped forward and lifted his right hand. Using his thumb, he cut his middle finger. Blood flowed out, turning it into a Blood Finger.

This was one of the arts that had been branded onto his mind by the Blood Immortal Legacy, one of the three magical abilities that did not require the use of the mask.

However, these arts required a very powerful Cultivation base. After practicing a bit secretly, Meng Hao had been able to utilize the Blood Finger. However, as far as the Blood Palm and Blood Death World, he was

still not able to use them.

In any case, this was the first time in tens of thousands of years that the Blood Finger had appeared in the Southern Domain. It was inherently powerful. When you consider that in the Blood Immortal Legacy spell matrix Meng Hao had already mastered the ability to focus the power of his Cultivation base, then this finger attack, combined with the three Perfect Dao Pillars of his Perfect Foundation, would shock even the Dao Children of various Sects.

Meng Hao strode forward and pressed the middle finger of his right hand between the eyebrows of the strange figure, then scraped it downward. A shrill scream sounded out as the figure's body began to tremble. A massive bloody cut appeared starting between its eyebrows and stretching down about thirty centimeters. Vast quantities of gray-colored Qi poured out. Suddenly, its body could move again, and it retreated at top speed, shooting out of the second floor.

Without hesitating, Meng Hao followed in pursuit, his eyes flashing. Everything was quiet, which was odd, so Meng Hao stopped. After thinking for a moment, he returned to his residence and then slapped his bag of holding. He took out the good luck charm and cast some Spiritual Sense into it, then breathed a sigh of relief when he found what he was looking for. It was still operational. He chose not to teleport away, but instead looked coldly out of the building. There was no wind or rustle of leaves, no sign of trouble or disturbance. If there were, he could leave in an instant.

Time passed, and suddenly a bloodcurdling scream rose up from from one of the surrounding mountains. Then a second, and a third. In the end, there were a total of five!

Three of them were actually Black Sieve Sect disciples who were in the region but hadn't hidden themselves. They screamed as their bodies withered up, their flesh and blood sucked away until their lifeless skin flopped onto the ground.

This night would not pass peacefully. Many of the Foundation

Establishment Cultivators were on guard, and even many of the Black Sieve Sect disciples were dispatched out. It wasn't until dawn broke that things seemed to calm down.

Many people saw that it was a broken-down figure who cruelly slaughtered the Black Sieve Sect disciples, and the two Foundation Establishment Cultivators. Eventually, the figure was put down by a Black Sieve Sect Elder. To most of the Cultivators, this counted as the explanation they had been waiting for.

In the following few days, there were no more mysterious deaths among the Foundation Establishment Cultivators. Gradually, people stopped talking about the event.

Time flashed by, and soon six days had passed since Meng Hao had arrived at the Black Sieve Sect. As the days passed, Meng Hao maintained his vigilance. However, no one bothered him during that time. On the dawn of the seventh day, the clear sound of bells rang out, filling the region of the Ten Thousand Mountains and reaching the ears of all the Foundation Establishment Cultivators.

"Fellow Daoists of the Southern Domain," a voice echoed out. "You have already received your Sieve Earth Pills. The time has come to perform your services. If you can help the Black Sieve Sect to acquire the object we seek, then you will be rewarded with more Sieve Earth Pills!" Beam after beam of multicoloured light shot up from the various mountains as the Foundation Establishment Cultivators flew into the sky. Meng Hao followed suit, flying up and floating in mid-air, looking around coldly.

From the Black Sieve Sect Thousand Mountains, dozens of beams of prismatic light whistled up into the air. In addition, there were multiple black-colored Feng Shui compasses, each one around thirty meters in diameter.

Upon each Feng Shui compass stood only one person. Three or four wore Daoist robes of the Black Sieve Sect and were at the Qi Condensation stage. The others were all of the Foundation Establishment stage.

The Qi Condensation disciples all had embarrassed, nervous expressions

on their faces, as if they didn't want to be here. However, they could not defy the orders of the Sect. These were all Outer Sect disciples who had ordinary latent talent. Disciples with better latent talent would not have been dispatched out.

Shortly afterward, ten violet colored Feng Shui compasses, three hundred meters in diameter, flew out from the Hundred Mountains region of the Black Sieve Sect. Upon each of these compasses sat a cross-legged Cultivator. One of them was the girl named Han Bei. As far as the nine other violet-robed Cultivators who sat cross-legged on the compasses, there were both men and women. All of them seemed in high spirits. These were obviously Chosen from the Sect.

They flew forth and then hovered in the air. Further off in the distance, three golden-colored, three-thousand meter wide Feng Shui compasses appeared. They flew forward.

On each of these compasses sat a person. Two were men and one was a woman. One was Elder Chen, and the other two appeared to be middle-aged, with cold expressions. The power of Core Formation rippled out from them, attracting everyone's attention.

After the golden Feng Shui compasses, another, smaller one appeared. It was only about three hundred meters in diameter, and violet colored. Sitting cross-legged on this Feng Shui compass was an old man in a violet robe.

He had a black birthmark on his face which somewhat spoiled his transcendent demeanor. He looked fierce, and the instant he appeared, it seemed as if everything suddenly grew dark.

However, what caught Meng Hao's attention wasn't the old man. Behind him was a massive Feng Shui compass with hundreds of Cultivators. Amidst them was a lonely looking woman.

The instant he caught sight of her, Meng Hao thought of that day years ago, under the moonlight. In his mind, he could see her looking back at him, and could even hear the words she had spoken.

"I went to the Pill Cultivation Workshop. The Cosmetic Cultivation Pill

you gave me before wasn't purchased by you."

Elder Sister Xu.

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If you want to re-read the part with the quote from Elder Sister Xu, it's at the very end of Chapter 37: Water and Ink in the Evening

Also, here is an official ISSTH depiction of Xu Qing. (I'm 95.72% sure this is an official Xu Qing picture. It appears in official ISSTH promotional material and comes up in search engine searches as being her. If anyone has any information to the contrary please let me know.)



# Chapter 145: An Ancient Mountain Path

“Patriarch Violet Sieve!”

“I never imagined that the person leading us would be the Black Sieve Sect’s Nascent Soul eccentric Patriarch Violet Sieve. They say his killing aura is incredible! Years ago when he was forming his Nascent Soul, his name rocked the Southern Domain. Once he wiped out three Sects in a single night!”

“According to the rumors, the Black Sieve Sect has already entered that danger zone five times. Each time they leave behind people to stay on guard. Today is the sixth time. Even still, look at how many people they’ve mustered! This Sect is so powerful! No wonder they’re one of the five great Sects of the Southern Domain.”

Meng Hao heard the talk around him and also felt the pressure exuded by the violet-robed old man. But his vision was focused further back, on the enormous, nine thousand meter wide yellow Feng Shui compass which was flying in his direction. Standing atop it, amidst hundreds of Cultivators, was a woman.

She wore a long, black gown, and her face was pale white, almost bloodless. This made her already chilly disposition even icier. However... looking at her, Meng Hao got the sense that in truth, she was actually just covering up her fragile heart.

“Elder Sister Xu...” he murmured as he looked at her. Finally he could rest a bit at ease. Now, they weren’t so very far away from each other. And yet, despite being so close to each other, they were still worlds apart....

It was at this point that Meng Hao frowned. He noticed that standing next to Elder Sister Xu was a pretty woman with a coquettish air and a sneer in her eyes. It seemed as if she were criticizing Elder Sister Xu, who then lowered her head as if she didn’t dare to speak. Her face grew even paler.

A cold glow appeared in Meng Hao’s eyes.



Along with Elder Sister Xu, there were several hundred disciples on top of the massive Feng Shui compass. Their Cultivation bases were varied, but it was obvious that they were ordinary disciples, not Chosen of the Sect.

Also on the Feng Shui compass was a gigantic pitch-black statue of a bare-chested man with wings growing out of his back. The wings were half spread open, giving the statue a very peculiar look.

Even more strange was that a very tall hat was perched atop the statue's head, which seemed very out of place.

If that were all there was to it, it wouldn't be a big deal. But upon further inspection with his extraordinary Spiritual Sense, Meng Hao noticed that the statue was not entirely lifeless: it was breathing!

With every breath, it sucked in a bit of Qi from the hundreds of Black Sieve Sect disciples who stood around it.

Meng Hao's eyes narrowed. Many of the disciples on the Feng Shui compass looked in very high spirits; they obviously had no idea what the statue was doing.

On the ten-sided violet Feng Shui compass was a refined and elegant young man. He stood up with a smile and spoke to the group of rogue Cultivators, including Meng Hao. "Fellow Daoists, I presume many of you know me. I am Xie Jie of the Black Sieve Sect."

Meng Hao recognized the voice as the one who had spoken moments before.

"I think quite a few Fellow Daoists have some speculations regarding our trip today," he said with a smile. "I will explain further once we are on our way! Please, follow me!" The violet Feng Shui compass upon which he stood suddenly expanded in size until it was three thousand meters wide, and then flew toward them.

Meng Hao and the other rogue Foundation Establishment Cultivators all seemed to be thinking different things. However, one by one, they began to fly, transforming into beams of light and shooting toward the violet Feng

Shui Compass.

Among the roughly one hundred rogue Cultivators, most were at the early Foundation Establishment stage, like Meng Hao. There were eighteen of the mid Foundation Establishment stage, and as far as the late Foundation Establishment stage, there were only three.

Of those three, one was the old man whom Meng Hao had arrived with. Another was a fierce-looking man who wore white robes and let off a ghastly air. He had no beard, and even his Adam's apple was very small. However, he was surrounded by a desolate killing aura.

The last was a woman. Her features were plain, and she was somewhat overweight. However, her late Foundation Establishment Cultivation base rippled, causing everyone around her to treat her very politely. The three of them joined Xie Jie on his Feng Shui Compass. Xie Jie treated them much more respectfully than he did the others, leading them off to the side with him.

At the same time, Meng Hao looked around at the rogue Foundation Establishment Cultivators and caught sight of Lu Tao over in the corner, along with the richly-dressed woman from the secret meeting.

There was another person who caught Meng Hao's attention; this person appeared to be at the early Foundation Establishment stage, and milled about innocuously in the midst of the crowd. Meng Hao's eyes passed over him at first; it was a hard to describe Qi that caught his attention. It was like the stench which might roll off of a rotting corpse.

No one else seemed to notice, but after a while, Meng Hao thought about the information from the Demon Sealing Jade. He also thought back to the prickly Qi he had sensed in the Black Sieve Sect.

The Feng Shui compass began to vibrate beneath their feet and then shot forward. Together with the other Black Sieve Sect Feng Shui compasses, they transformed into colorful beams of light as they sped through the air.

The direction they were heading turned out to be the Hundred Mountains of the Black Sieve Sect.

Meng Hao stood there quietly, unmoving. Anyone who looked at him saw a Cultivation base at the early Foundation Establishment stage. He stood in the middle of all the Cultivators. Other than Lu Tao, no one seemed to notice him. Elder Sister Xu didn't notice him either. Her face was covered with a bitter expression, as if she was pondering her own future.

As the Feng Shui compasses neared the middle of the Hundred Mountains, the tendrils of smoke rising up from the massive incense burner began to twist in the air above the Sect. Layer upon layer, they twisted together to form an enormous ring of smoke.

As the smoke ring formed, the space in the middle began to ripple. Meng Hao watched as the lead Feng Shui compass entered into the smoke ring and then disappeared. His eyes flickered as the violet Feng Shui compass he stood on entered the ring.

Soon all of the Feng Shui compasses and Cultivators had entered, whereupon the smoke ring disappeared and the Black Sieve Sect returned to its normal state. Outside of the Hundred Mountains, a shield appeared. Shields also sprung up around the Thousand Mountains and the Hundred Thousand Mountains. The entire Sect was now sealed up tight; no one could leave or enter.

About the same time that the Black Sieve Sect sealed itself, Divine Sense from multiple locations began to sweep about the State of Clear Skies. This was Divine Sense from various Sects and Clans within the Southern Domain, come to investigate what was happening within the Black Sieve Sect.

Because of different agreements that they had with the Black Sieve Sect, they couldn't interfere.

Back on the Feng Shui compass, Xie Jie's voice rang out: "Fellow Daoists, there's no reason to be alarmed. This is one of the Black Sieve Sect's most valuable treasures, the Heaven Forged Furnace. In ancient times, it was inscribed with void-penetrating runes that turn it into a teleportation portal.

“As to where the teleportation portal leads to, I’m afraid none of you are familiar with it. Even I myself don’t really know....” The teleportation just now had caused a buzz of conversation to arise, but after hearing Xie Jie’s words, everyone quieted back down.

Meng Hao looked around coldly. They seemed to be surrounded by blackness interspersed with points of like stars. Everything around them was empty, without the least bit of light. Only the glow emitted by the Feng Shui compasses illuminated the people on them.

Ahead, one Feng Shui compass after another flew along. Most of the Black Sieve Sect disciples were sitting cross-legged meditating. Only the group of Chosen on the violet Feng Shui compass was staring out into the blackness.

Further away, the three Core Formation eccentrics seemed to be discussing something amongst themselves with Divine thought. And then, there was the most powerful person of all, Patriarch Violet Sieve, who sat motionless meditating, his eyes closed.

Elder Sister Xu was sitting silently in the midst of the several hundred Black Sieve Sect disciples. The statue in their midst seemed as if it were about to melt into the blackness of this dark world. Ghost images resonated out from it, adding to its bizarreness.

On Xie Jie’s Feng Shui compass, one of the three late Foundation Establishment Cultivators, an old man in a gray robe, frowned and said, “Fellow Daoist Xie, you said you’ve been to this place a few times before. Yet, you don’t know how to describe where we’re going....?”

Xie Jie seemed to hesitate in thought for a moment and then looked around for a moment. “Well,” he said, “I do know a bit about the path we’re traveling. As Fellow Daoist Tu surmised, this is a path that Cultivators in ancient times would use to travel to the stars to collect foreign Spirit lineages. It is a path between Mountains!” The surrounding Cultivators stared in astonishment at him and, then looked around them, seemingly intent on fixing everything around them into the memories.

“It’s not a true path between Mountains,” said Xie Jie, looking around

contentedly at the shocked looks on the faces of the rogue Foundation Establishment Cultivators. “Only Immortals can tread that path. This is just a subsidiary branch, like one of the hundreds of streams which flow into the Milky Way. That having been said, it’s still a path we should not be able to walk, which is why we need the power of the Heaven Forged Furnace of the Black Sieve Sect. It can protect us as we travel the path.”

It turned out that this was not a true path between Mountains, but only a branch of one. Even still, to open it required the power of a great Sect; an ordinary Sect wouldn’t be able to.

Xie Jie’s eyes swept over the crowd and came to rest on Meng Hao. He frowned a bit, then said, “Ah, you must be Fellow Daoist Meng. Please, come sit over here.” He had actually taken notice of Meng Hao much earlier. Before departing earlier in the day, the three Core Formation Patriarchs had personally charged him with the task of keeping an eye on Meng Hao.

He wasn’t sure why, and didn’t understand why three Core Formation Patriarchs would pay attention to a trifling early Foundation Establishment stage rogue Cultivator. He smiled at Meng Hao, but this smile was not genuine. He had no goodwill toward Meng Hao and had called his name simply to sow discord among the other Cultivators. Perhaps in this way he could get some clues about Meng Hao.

Exactly as he had anticipated, his words caused the surrounding rogue Cultivators to look over at Meng Hao. Many of them stared.

Meng Hao’s expression was the same as ever, as if he didn’t care in the least. He’d known that his actions the other night would arouse some sort of attention. It was unavoidable. So hearing Xie Jie’s words, he nodded slightly.

“I’m fine where I am,” he said. “My Cultivation base is weak, so it wouldn’t be suitable for me to sit amongst such powerful figures.”

Of course, the three Core Formation eccentrics who were communicating with Divine thought up ahead noticed this. They didn’t interfere. They weren’t sure what extraordinary abilities Meng Hao

possessed. This was why the Black Sieve Sect Leader had issued special instructions to pay attention to Meng Hao.

Xie Jie smiled lightly and was about to say something else, when suddenly the Feng Shui compass shook, and suddenly stopped moving. The Feng Shui compasses up ahead also stopped. The magical light emitted by the compasses instantly went out.

The faces of the three Core Formation eccentrics changed. The eminently powerful Patriarch Violet Sieve opened his eyes for the first time. They shone with both dignity and caution.

An archaic voice suddenly echoed out in the minds of all the Cultivators. “Everyone quiet!” It was as if an intangible seal had been placed on all of them, preventing them from speaking.

Within the silent darkness around them suddenly appeared a beautiful, five-colored glowing light. In front of them appeared an enormous jellyfish, tens of thousands of meters large. Its countless tentacles swayed gently, and its semi-transparent body slowly rippled. Its glow shone down into the eyes of the onlookers.

Within the body of the jellyfish, everyone was able to see a rotting corpse. It appeared to have been half digested by the jellyfish.

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Xie Jie’s name in Chinese is 谢杰 xiè jié – Xie is a surname, and also the word for “thanks.” Jie means “outstanding” or “heroic”

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# Chapter 146: This is Ultimate Vexation!

There was a hole between the eyebrows of the corpse, which appeared to be completely frozen. It was as if the rest of the corpse might decay, but this spot would exist for all eternity.

Everyone stood stock still, gazing at the jellyfish as it slowly floated along. Its long tentacles drifted through the midst of the Feng Shui compasses, then proceeded on into the distance. Finally, Patriarch Violet Sieve let out a light sigh. He stood and faced the departing jellyfish. Claspng his hands together, he gave a deep, respectful bow.

Then, his ancient voice slowly filled the air. "That was the third generation Ancestor of the Black Sieve Sect. His Cultivation base was at the peak of the Dao Seeking stage. As he was attempting to reach Immortal Ascension, a Patriarch of the Wang Clan mounted a sneak attack against him. He was not able to achieve Immortality, and fell to this path.

"That year, our Sect and the Wang Clan fought a bloody war that lasted for three thousand years. Eventually, the hostilities ceased. However, all of you Black Sieve Sect disciples should take to heart this bit of Sect history."

It seemed that for many of the Black Sieve Sect disciples, this was their first time hearing of the matter. Their eyes glittered brightly as they listened. Meng Hao's heart thumped as he silently watched the jellyfish depart.

Soon, the group proceeded onward; they didn't encounter any more strange phenomena like the jellyfish. They flew for about two days, until suddenly, the blinding glow of the Feng Shui compasses disappeared down a smaller branch of this path between Mountains.

Meng Hao could now see an incredible mountain range that stretched out seemingly without end. Everything was gray as far as the eye could see, with no vegetation present whatsoever. Far in the distance was what appeared to be a massive, fissure-like canyon that formed a path.

On either side of the path were cliffs that stretched down so far that the

bottom wasn't visible.

Surprisingly, there were several hundred Cultivators sitting cross-legged outside of the canyon. Their faces were all pale, and they looked somewhat down and out. Forty or fifty of them were wearing random styles of clothing, and were obviously not Black Sieve Sect disciples. They were a group of rogue Foundation Establishment Cultivators who had arrived much earlier than the group Meng Hao was part of.

The two groups exchanged glances.

The rest of the Cultivators were Black Sieve Sect disciples. When they caught sight of the group led by Patriarch Violet Sieve, their expressions grew brighter. They all stood up, and from within their midst emerged a beautiful, middle-aged woman wearing resplendent clothing. She emanated a mature grace, although her face was somewhat pale.

When she saw Patriarch Violet Sieve, she let out a light sigh, and nodded.

The woman didn't notice Meng Hao, but he recognized her. She was the one who had taken Xu Qing away from the Reliance Sect all those years ago.

"Together with Patriarch Violet Sieve, there are now two Nascent Soul Cultivators present," thought Meng Hao. "... Exactly what is this place? Is it really a Blessed Land?" He thought for a moment, then lifted his hand up to pat his bag of the Cosmos. He then held up the good luck charm and sent a bit of spiritual power into it. He still sensed the teleportation ability within, which lessened some of his anxiety.

One of the main reasons he'd decided to come to the Black Sieve Sect was because of his ability to rely on the good luck charm's teleportation. Patriarch Reliance had kept this object in his collection, which caused Meng Hao to be confident in it, even though he'd never tried it out.

Out of the corner of his eyes, he caught sight of Xu Qing within the large group of Cultivators. Her brow was furrowed as the coquettish woman next to her ridiculed her.



Meng Hao frowned. He could see that Elder Sister Xu was unhappy. He glanced at the coquettish woman, and the coldness in his eyes grew icier.

It was at this moment that Patriarch Violet Sieve stood up, and the Feng Shui compass beneath him shrank down. He strode forward toward the beautiful woman, and they began to converse in low tones. An unsightly expression appeared on the face of Patriarch Violet Sieve as they continued to discuss some matter. Then, they turned together and walked toward the fissure-like canyon.

Next, all of the Black Sieve Sect disciples left the Feng Shui compasses, transforming into beams of light as they shot into the fissure. The Cultivators sitting cross-legged outside of the fissure also rose to their feet and moved in.

Xie Jie clasped hands toward the rogue Cultivators, including Meng Hao. "Ladies and gentleman, please, follow me." The Feng Shui compass beneath them began to shrink. Everyone seemed to be considering what to do. However, no one retreated. Taking their various thoughts with them, the group turned into beams of light and shot into the fissure.

Meng Hao's expression was calm as he flew forward slowly. Behind him, the group containing Xu Qing began to follow. However, she was obviously not of Foundation Establishment; she couldn't achieve true flight and instead flew along on top of a colorful mist.

Meng Hao slowed down a bit, but then Xie Jie suddenly turned and looked at him, his eyes flashing like lightning. It seemed he was about to say something, but then didn't, as a woman suddenly approaching Meng Hao from off to the side.

"Fellow Daoist Meng, we meet again." The woman wore a long, violet robe. She was beautiful and charming, and when she smiled, her teeth were white. She flew along at Meng Hao's side.

"Ah, Fellow Daoist Han," said Meng Hao, looking at her and nodding. This was the woman who had delivered the Sieve Earth Pill to him a few days ago.

The group of people, nearly one thousand strong, whistled through the

air into the fissure. Cliffs rose up on either side of them. Nothing was visible beneath them, as if the fissure was bottomless.

“Fellow Daoist Meng,” Han Bei said suddenly, her voice light and pleasant, “you have a very refined style. Presumably, you come from an extraordinary family. Do you really need to participate in this event just to get a Sieve Earth Pill?”

Meng Hao’s eyes flickered as he looked at her.

“I’m afraid I don’t understand what you’re talking about, Fellow Daoist Han.” At this point, the group had flown quite a distance into the fissure. The cliff walls around them were gradually turning black in color. The rocks were now beginning to glitter.

Before Han Bei could respond to him, the surrounding Cultivators began to speak excitedly.

“This is... a crystal cliff!”

“What is this place? There’s so much crystal! It’s even superior to high-grade Spirit Stones!”

Some of the Cultivators flew up and struck the crystal cliff face, clearly intending to dig some out.

However, the instant they struck the cliff wall, blood-curdling screams rang out as their bodies withered up. Their life force, flesh and blood were sucked away in an instant. In the blink of an eye, they were transformed into drifting ash, including their bags of holding. The places where they had touched the cliff walls now seemed to have grown a bit more crystal than before. It twinkled mysteriously.

Seeing this, Meng Hao’s eyes narrowed. The surrounding rogue Cultivators sucked in their breaths. As for the Black Sieve Sect disciples, they didn’t even seem to notice. Apparently, they were already aware of what the crystal cliff wall could do.

“Brother Meng,” said Han Bei with a deep, meaningful smile. “You’re being watched. Please look out for yourself. By the way... are you really surnamed Meng?” Before he could respond, she left his side.

Suddenly, an enormous roaring sound could be heard. It filled the air, causing everything to shake. Then, just as suddenly, it disappeared. Meng Hao frowned as Han Bei flew away from him. Then his gaze fell onto an enormous stone door up ahead, which Patriarch Violet Sieve and the beautiful middle-aged woman had worked together to destroy.

The stone door was refusing to stay in pieces. It seemed to have been congealed by some unusual power that caused it to grow back together.

Past the broken the stone door, Meng Hao saw another group of two hundred cross-legged Cultivators. They stood up. In front of them was a pale-faced young man who held a pearl in his hands. The pearl let off a gentle glow which seemed to be slowing the recovery process of the stone door.

“Junior Liu Wu extends greetings to the Patriarchs.” As he spoke, Patriarch Violet Sieve and the beautiful woman entered through the stone door. They flicked their sleeves, causing the door to repair itself even more slowly.

Next, the group of a thousand Cultivators, including Meng Hao, shot quickly through. It didn't matter whether or not they wanted to, because behind the group were the three Core Formation eccentrics. With them taking up the rear, no one would dare to retreat backward.

The path beyond the stone door was even stranger. There were four similar doors in total that had to be destroyed, beyond each of which waited more Black Sieve Sect disciples.

As they proceeded, Meng Hao grew more and more cautious. Obviously, the Black Sieve Sect had investigated this area more than once. In fact, they seemed to have done so many times.

“These stone doors are like seals. This place....” Meng Hao looked ahead, his brow furrowed. Suddenly, he stopped moving. He wasn't the only one; everyone stopped and stared ahead.

There in front of them was a large black door. This door was not made of stone, but rather of some metallic substance. It was inset into both cliff walls, and emitted a black glow. On the surface of the door was an

enormous face. The face's eyes were closed, as if it were sleeping.

As they approached, the eyes suddenly opened, and the face emitted a roar which caused everything to shake. Even Patriarch Violet Sieve couldn't prevent himself from coughing up a mouthful of blood.

Meng Hao did as well. The blood spit up by the group of people turned into a stream that the giant face sucked in. After gobbling up the blood, it let out a burp.

The face's voice was like the roar of thunder: "In accordance with the orders of my master, I guard Ultimate Vexation. Without the pendant, you may not enter the... Uh, what are you guys doing here again?"

Patriarch Violet Sieve and the beautiful woman both clasped hands and bowed deeply, reverent looks on their faces. Patriarch Violet Sieve pulled out a bamboo tube, out from which flew a dilapidated hide.

When he saw the hide, Meng Hao's eyes narrowed. The feeling he got when looking at it was exactly the same as that from the strange figure that night.

As the hide flew out, the indistinct image of an eye appeared. The eye stared at Meng Hao.

Their gazes locked, and Meng Hao's pupils constricted.

The hide unfurled and came to rest in front of the face.

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If you forgot about the "beautiful, middle-aged woman" then you should re-read Chapter 42: Who Dares to Touch Him!?

# Chapter 147: Looking at Each Other

“You can only use this thing one time,” said the face, yawning. As it spoke, a fierce cry suddenly rang out from behind the group of people.

Meng Hao looked back and saw that the strange statue that was being carried along suddenly was melting. It turned into three globes of black mist. Inside each mist sphere was an old person surrounded by Death Qi. These were none other than the three people who had been on the tall platform beneath the Black Sieve Sect!

The Elder shot toward the face within their black mists. Next, they merged into it, causing it to twist and distort. Slowly, the mouth opened wide.

An archaic voice sounded out: “Enter quickly, we can only hold on for the time it takes half an incense stick to burn!” The voice sounded as if it had sprung from the yellow springs of the netherworld. It echoed out, shaking the hearts of everyone present.

Before anyone could make a move, a flickering figure emerged from within the depths of the mouth. It was a middle-aged man; it seemed as if his entire Cultivation base was burning. Half of his body was completely destroyed, and his Crimson Core was visible inside, burning.

His hair was wild, and his face twisted with insanity. As he rushed out, he screamed, “All dead! The Hundred Names Pillar was not completed. All dead. HAHAHA! All dead....”

“That’s Elder Zheng!”

“It is! He was in the advanced group that came here. How did he end up like that....”

A buzz of conversation immediately arose amongst the Black Sieve Sect disciples, who had instantly recognized the man. Xie Jie’s pupils constricted, and Han Bei’s expression flickered as she narrowed her eyes, within which flashed a strange light. The other Black Sieve Sect Chosen all had similar reactions.

The man rushed out in a frenzy, spewing lunacy, which echoed about within the fissure. Everyone was shocked at his words.

His shocking condition was even more astonishing. Considering his Crimson Core was visible, it was obvious that he was a Core Formation eccentric. For him to be in such a miserable state, and obviously insane, left everyone wondering what they might possibly be facing inside.

The man's words continued to echo about, especially the word "dead," which he'd uttered three times. It was like an invisible hammer, which struck down onto the hearts of those who heard him.

The Black Sieve Sect disciples were slightly less affected. After all, they knew a bit more about this place than Meng Hao and the other rogue Cultivators. Their numbers had increased as the group passed through one door after another, and now there were about two hundred of them. The faces of each and every one twisted.

An intangible shadow of death seemed to spread out from the crazed Core Formation eccentric, filling the area.

However, even as the man flew out of the black door ranting, Patriarch Violet Sieve's eyes shone with a powerful glow. He strode forward toward Elder Zheng and raised his hand. Color suddenly seemed to fade from the world, and Elder Zheng rushed toward Patriarch Violet Sieve, seemingly out of control. As he lurched forward, Patriarch Violet Sieve lifted his right hand and slapped the man on the top of the head.

The slap rang out with a boom that shook everything. Crazed Elder Zheng's body trembled, and his eyes suddenly grew clear. The burning of the Crimson Core within him began to fade.

He had recovered his wits, but before he could say anything, Patriarch Violet Sieve let out a cold harrumph and then flicked his sleeve. A black wind appeared, sweeping up Elder Zheng and tossing him away.

"Ramblings! You're an Elder, so I've spared your life. Return to the Sect and go into secluded meditation for a hundred years as punishment!" Patriarch Violet Sieve acted quickly and efficiently. He lifted his hand, and immediately Meng Hao and the other rogue Foundation Establishment

Cultivators felt an intense pressure that sent their hearts racing.

“Rogue Cultivators from outside the Sect,” he said coolly, “you have accepted our Sect’s medicinal pills and have signed our contract with your thumbprint. We have arrived at the ancient Blessed Land. Unfortunately, its interior is unstable and also incompatible with high level Cultivation bases.

“If you are able to acquire some of the designated items, then you can trade them for more Sieve Earth Pills. Take these jade slips.” Pressure filled the area. He flicked his sleeve, and immediately two hundred jade slips flew out to hover in front of the rogue Cultivators.

“There is no doubt that this is a dangerous place, but it is not a death trap. After all, many of our Sect’s own disciples will enter with you. Please, rest assured.” As he spoke, the beautiful middle-aged woman next to him coolly looked over the crowd. The two of them did not need to utter any threats. Considering the Cultivation bases, no one could possibly defy them.

Meng Hao silently placed the good luck charm into his bag of holding. Around him, the other rogue Cultivators maintained similar silence. It was impossible to tell what any of them were thinking.

These were people who had reached Foundation Establishment but were not members of any Sect. There might be some among such rogue Cultivators who are stupid and foolish, but most of them could scheme and calculate. They had chosen to come to this place for their own benefit, and were also aware that there would be danger.

Seven or eight figures flashed ahead, heading directly toward the black door. As soon as they entered the mouth, they disappeared.

With them having taken the lead, the others followed in quick succession, flying forward wordlessly into the face on the large black door.

Murmuring to himself, Meng Hao looked at Patriarch Violet Sieve and the beautiful middle-aged woman. In the very rear were the Core Formation eccentrics, who were watching over the proceedings with cold faces.

“Elder Sister Xu seems to be in some sort of trouble. Now that I’m here, I can’t just ignore it.” His eyes filled with determination. His body flew up along with a few dozen nearby Cultivators, who all turned into beams of light that shot toward the face in the black door. About halfway there, he turned his head and looked back.

He saw Xie Jie with his faint, hypocritical smile. There was pretty Han Bei, as well as the other Black Sieve Sect Chosen. And off in the distance, amidst the crowd, was pale-faced Xu Qing.

When Meng Hao’s gaze fell upon her, Xu Qing suddenly trembled, staring in shock. A look of disbelief filled her face as... she looked back at him.

Many years had passed, and Meng Hao had experienced great change. But, she recognized him immediately. She had brought him to the Reliance Sect, and he had become her Junior Brother. He was the one who had given her the Cosmetic Cultivation Pill underneath the moon.

Scenes from the past filled Xu Qing’s mind. The memories of that time, the frustrations, all merged within her heart to ripple out like a dream.

Their gazes locked. There were a thousand people in between them, but despite the distance and the time, they were not far apart. Rather, they were very, very close to each other.

Meng Hao gave her a warm smile. The entire reason he had come to the Black Sieve Sect to begin with was to see her, an old friend. Now, he had seen her, and she him.

He turned and disappeared into the mouth of the face in the black door. The moment he vanished, Xu Qing’s heart suddenly seemed to grow empty. Without realizing it, she took a step forward.

But it was too late. Meng Hao was gone. Feelings welled up inside of her that she didn’t understand. On the outside, she was as cold as ever.

Usually, no one could touch her heart; she protected it fiercely. However, for some reason a feeling of joy had arisen inside her.

Then Meng Hao had disappeared, and she felt as if she had lost



something. She rarely experienced such feelings, and when she did, she would suppress them. Today, however, the feeling could not be suppressed.

“Hey, I’m talking to you, slut!” It was the coquettish girl who was standing next to her. “If you want to pretend you can’t hear me, fine,” she said venomously. “But do you really think you can avoid me? Humph!” She laughed coldly. “You got injured last time. If Elder Brother Zhao hadn’t asked Junior Sister Han to save you, then you would have died inside. But, instead of being thankful, you got more standoffish! It’s just a little cherry, why do you care so much about that? What an idiot!” The coquettish woman looked at Xu Qing’s cold, beautiful face and gave a grim smile. The more jealous she got, the more she wanted Xu Qing to end up like her.

Xu Qing turned around to face the woman who had treated her so poorly all these years. One word at a time, she said, “That day in the Blessed Land, it was your own Elder Brother Zhao who broke the rules and almost got me killed. And Elder Sister Han didn’t save me because Elder Brother Zhao asked her to, but because she took my bag of holding and just happened to grab me along with it.”

Her demeanor was cold, and her expression very serious. This was the personality that she usually kept hidden from her fellow disciples. The coquettish woman could never have anticipated that the Xu Qing who she constantly taunted would ever talk back to her. She stared for a moment and then laughed coldly.

“So, the slut dares to speak,” she said derisively. “Elder Brother Zhao has already arranged everything. You won’t be able to get away this time. I’m going to stand there and watch while your cherry gets taken. Eventually, you’ll thank me.” The Cultivators around her began to fly up into the air toward the black door.

Xu Qing’s body flashed as she stepped onto her colorful mist and shot forward.

The coquettish woman was behind her, laughing coldly. But, then she noticed a man up ahead, wearing a violet robe. He looked back, and a

charming smile instantly covered her face.

The handsome man in the violet robe was young and had a Cultivation base of the early Foundation Establishment stage. He nodded at her slightly. Then his gaze fell upon Xu Qing, and his eyes filled with a burning desire.

This was none other than the man the coquettish woman constantly spoke about. Elder Brother Zhao.

# Chapter 148: Things Are About To Go Down

After everyone entered the black door, the massive face began to warp. Three misty figures dissolved out of the face, which then transformed into three wizened old Cultivators. They looked as if they had just crawled out of the grave.

Without hesitation, they head back toward the statue from which they had come. As they moved toward it, massive amounts of black Qi emanated off of them, as if they were corroding.

“What happened?” said the face. “Oh well. Anyway, without the authentication item, you cannot enter!” It looked confused for a moment, but then its eyes grew clear and it began to howl.

Currently, there were only eleven people left within the fissure. In addition to Patriarch Violet Sieve and the beautiful middle-aged woman, there were nine others, all of them Core Formation Cultivators. They ignored the howls of the face in the door, sitting down cross-legged and closing their eyes. At the same time, their hands flickered with incantation gestures. In the middle of the group of nine appeared a Ginseng fruit, floating in the air.

The fruit was glittering and translucent. Its interior roiled as if it contained luck from the Heavens inside.

The Spirit fruit writhed along with the rotation of the nine Cultivation bases, and it looked as if it were beginning to grow a head and four limbs.

Patriarch Violet Sieve and the beautiful middle-aged woman stood off to the side, their gazes fixed onto the Spirit fruit.

“I went in once,” said the middle-aged woman with a frown. “But after the space of about thirty breaths, the expelling force within became very intense. Even with my Divine Sense, I was unable to locate the object. I can only hope that the Hundred Spirits Tower will be effective. It’s still not quite complete. Hopefully this time there will be enough.”

Patriarch Violet Sieve was silent for a moment before coolly replying, “I personally prepared this Spirit Ginseng. With the Ginseng form, we can stay inside for the time it takes an incense stick to burn. Everything is prepared. If we cannot succeed this time, then in accord with the words of the Sect Leader and the Patriarchs, we will open the Blessed Land to the public. We will borrow the might of the entire Southern Domain to refine the object of legends. After all, to Cultivators like us, that object is the only hope we have other than the Rebirth Cave!”

The beautiful woman hesitated for a moment and then said, “If that happens, though, we will be forced to share. Even if the Black Sieve Sect does the refining, the more people who are involved, the less of a chance we will get our turn.... I might have it a bit better off, but you and the others will be much more limited.”

“True. Even if we have to sacrifice some of our own Sect’s disciples this time, we will not fail!” A dark violet color appeared within the birthmark on his face, giving him a very fierce appearance.

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The world spun, making it impossible to determine which direction was which. Everything was murky. It wasn’t long, though, before everything began to grow clear. The dark sky grew a deep blue color. The earth below was filled with dark soil.

Verdant foliage was everywhere, covering the hills, which rose and fell off into the distance. A large river snaked through mountains, and the gurgling sound of water could be heard.

This was what Meng Hao saw when he appeared. No one else was visible, only him.

“This place is pretty big....” he said, looking up into the sky. The sun was beginning to set, filling the sky with a beautiful red color.

In fact, upon closer observation, Meng Hao was able to see evidence of an invisible moon.

“The meeting place for our Classic of Time group is the place where the

image of the sun and moon intersect.” Meng Hao’s eyes glittered as he strode forward, transforming into a beam of prismatic light.

“And then there’s that supposed Hundred Spirits Tower. What’s that?” Meng Hao felt misgivings in his heart. As he moved forward, the first thing he did was retrieve the good luck charm from within his bag of the Cosmos. Probing it with Spiritual Sense, he felt a bit more at ease. He was really coming to value the good luck charm more and more.

“No wonder Patriarch Reliance had this charm in his collection. It can even teleport out of this place.” He put the good luck charm back. This was now his life-saving treasure.

“Elder Sister Xu was right behind me, but who knows where the Black Sieve Sect people appeared. Did they come out together, or were they sent in randomly? The latter is more likely. Well, in any case, I need to find her as quickly as possible.” A fierce glow appeared in his eyes as he thought of the cold laugh of the coquettish woman who had stood next to Elder Sister Xu, and of Xu Qing’s pale face.

As he thought about her, he took out the jade slip distributed by the Black Sieve Sect. Imbuing it with some Spiritual Sense, he saw a list of names. He perused the list, retracted his Spiritual Sense, and then crushed the jade slip.

Then he shot forward in search of Elder Sister Xu.

Time passed, and soon evening fell. The sky grew dark, and the moon rose. Everything was dark. Meng Hao currently stood on a small hill, looking out at some ancient ruins not too far off in front of him.

At the moment, the moon was covered by dark clouds, causing the ruins up ahead to be somewhat obscured. They seemed incredibly old, as if they had seen the passing of many ages. Meng Hao got the feeling that many, many years ago, it had been a bustling city.

Now, though, it was half consumed by the land. Only a few structures were visible, and even they were falling apart. On this moonlit night, it seemed very lonely. The wind blew across the ruins, carrying strange sounds with it.

It sounded like countless people murmuring softly. Meng Hao couldn't make out what they were saying, but all of the voices combined together created a very bizarre feeling.

In front of the ruins was a stone stele. Almost nothing remained of the characters that had once been carved into it, but now it was almost completely blank, and covered with cracks.

He looked it over, and was about to turn and leave when suddenly his expression flickered. The dark clouds passed, and suddenly moonlight spilled down. Meng Hao caught sight of something in one of the cracks in the stone stele. There inside was a golden vine-like twig. It seemed to be squirming. It was covered with leaves that wrapped around tiny pieces of fruits the size of a thumb.

He recognized this fruit from the jade slip he had just crushed; it was one of the items the Black Sieve Sect wanted, and was called a Moonstone fruit.

His expression calm, Meng Hao did nothing. He simply sat on the hill cross-legged, looking out with cold eyes.

Not too much time passed before a figure sped out from the nearby forest. It was a middle-aged man with a Cultivation base at the early Foundation Establishment stage. He shot directly toward the stone stele, arriving in front of it in the blink of an eye. He reached up to grab the Moonstone fruit.

However, the instant he touched one of the fruits, a cold light sprang out from within the Stone Stele. The middle-aged Cultivator shot backward, a look of shock on his face. The cold light transformed into several beams, which swept toward him.

Popping sounds rang out, and the man coughed up blood. Astonishment was written on his face as he attempted to defend himself. But before he could do anything, his body began to tremble. Suddenly, his head flew off of his shoulders, severed. At the same time, the golden vines in the cracks of the stele extended out, entwining around the headless body. One of the vines stabbed into the bloody flesh. It seemed to be swallowing something.

Sure enough, in the space of a few breaths, the Cultivator's body shriveled and withered.

Meng Hao saw all of this happen. He continued to sit there quietly, a brilliant glow emanating from his eyes.

"What are the vines consuming?" he thought.

Even as he watched, the stone stele began to ripple and distort, and a grim-faced young man wearing a violet robe walked out of it. He was at the peak of the mid Foundation Establishment stage, close to the late stage. Wrapped around his arms were thick rattan vines, which stretched out like tentacles. He looked very fear inspiring.

Meng Hao had seen him before. He was one of the Black Sieve Sect disciples that had traveled in the group with him to this place. He had been among the Chosen on the violet Feng Shui compass.

The young man didn't give a passing glance to the shriveled up corpse. Instead, he raised his head to look directly at the hill where Meng Hao was seated. His eyes flashed.

Meng Hao sat there cross-legged, looking back at him. There was only a few hundred meters' distance between them. They looked at each other for the space of a few breaths. Then, the young man dashed forward and leaped into the air, his body transforming into a prismatic beam that shot toward Meng Hao.

Meanwhile, in a different location not too far away, Xu Qing sped along, her face pale. The colorful mist beneath her feet was on the verge of falling apart. Behind her was Elder Brother Zhao from the Black Sieve Sect. A smile covered his face. At his side was the coquettish woman, who was surnamed Xue. Together, they pursued Xu Qing in a leisurely fashion.

"Junior Sister Xu, you were able to get away last time because you got lucky," he said. He was quite handsome, this young man named Zhao. "This time, however, I paid off Elder Brother Xie. He issued a secret order for any disciple who caught sight of you to notify me. Look, we've only been here for a couple hours and I already found you." He laughed, and the sound of his voice rang into Xu Qing's ears, causing her face to grow

even more pale. She gritted her teeth tightly. She said nothing, instead shooting forward as fast as possible. However, it didn't really matter how fast she went. Zhao was a Foundation Establishment Cultivator, and there was really nothing she could do to evade him.

“Junior Sister Xu, you're lucky to have Elder Brother Zhao take a fancy to you. When it happened to me, I didn't like either, but things are fine now. Just give in, and everything will be fine.” The coquettish woman did nothing as the young man named Zhao rubbed his hands across her body. She laughed.

“I don't want to make it hard on you,” said Zhao, the fire in his eyes growing stronger. “I just want your cherry. I have a Foundation Establishment Pill that I can offer in trade. It's a fair price, but you just keep refusing me. You can't blame me for taking it by force.” He lifted a finger on his right hand.

The finger sent a stiff breeze flowing. It rushed past Xu Qing, causing her robes to lift up and reveal quite a bit of skin. Xu Qing trembled a bit, and some blood seeped out of the corners of her mouth. And yet, she just clenched her jaw and kept moving forward.

The young man named Zhao just laughed a few times. His eyes burned as he lifted his hand again.



# Chapter 149: Killing Intent!

Meng Hao stood on the top of the hill, calmly watching the violet-robed youth charging toward him. As he approached, he kicked up a wind, and the seven or eight tentacle-like vines expanded to the size of pythons. At their ends were wide mouths filled with sharp teeth.

“Mid Foundation Establishment stage,” said Meng Hao calmly, his face not changing in the slightest. He himself was only at the early Foundation Establishment stage, but he had a Perfect Foundation. He might not know any techniques from the Foundation Establishment stage, but he had the boundless Core sea from when he was at Qi Condensation, thanks to the Sublime Spirit Scripture. Also, he had reached Foundation Establishment after having achieved the Great Circle of Qi Condensation.

He was equipped with all of this when he experienced his explosive growth during the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament. The battle prowess of his Cultivation base was at such high level that he was able to go up against a Dao Child of the Li Clan, Li Daoyi. Although he had not achieved victory, he had severed his opponent’s arm. If it had been a Cultivator who was not a Dao Child, Meng Hao could have killed him easily.

After reaching the mid Foundation Establishment stage, he would definitely be able to hold his own against the Dao Children of the various Sects and Clans.

So, there is no need to even mention a mere Chosen of the mid Foundation Establishment stage.

The violet-robed youth approached with a cold smile and powerful killing intent. Meng Hao stood there, framed by the dark night, the moonlight shining down on him. His expression was as calm as ever as he lifted his hand, using his fingernail to slice open the skin on his finger. He stepped forward casually, and the instant the violet-robed youth arrived, waved his finger in a seemingly random fashion.

As the finger descended, a great wind sprang up. In response, the violet-

robed youth's expression changed. His pupils constricted, and his eyes filled with disbelief. Suddenly, his vision turned red; this was not an illusion, it was real.

Everything was red, and there was only a solitary finger, covered with fresh blood. It shot toward him.

The vines wrapped around his arms had been viciously writhing forward with open mouths ready to devour; but suddenly they began to emit miserable shrieks. They quivered, and before they were even thirty meters from Meng Hao, had collapsed into blood.

The blood transformed into a shield which surrounded the violet-robed young man. All of this takes some time to describe, but happened in time it takes for a spark to fly off of a piece of flint.

The violet-robed youth began to scream. He no longer charged forward, but tried to move backward in retreat. Meng Hao sprang into action.

He took a step and then flew into the air toward the violet-robed young man. He lifted his hand and touched the blood shield with his index finger.

"Break." He said the word lightly, and then an explosion filled the air.

The blood shield collapsed, and the vines on the young man's arms broke to pieces. Only the violet-golden fruit rippled with signs of life. It seemed to be begging for mercy.

"You...." The violet-robed youth's face was pale and he coughed up a mouthful of blood. His eyes were filled with intense fear. This was the first time he had even shown fear; he was a Chosen of the Black Sieve Sect, and a violet-robed disciple at that. His position in the Inner Sect was very high, and he had never been defeated with battle magic. Usually people sought him out because of his popularity. But now, seeing the expressionless Meng Hao in front of him, he was filled with an unprecedented feeling of life-or-death danger.

At this critical juncture, the violet-robed youth lifted his hands and flashed an incantation gesture, then swiped his palm forward seven or

eight times in succession. Each swipe sent ripples out, which then congealed into a massive, black-colored hand that faced up against Meng Hao.

Meng Hao, expression calm, opened his mouth and spat out the lightning mist. The mist slammed into the hand, and a boom filled the air.

The violet-robed young man's expression filled with despair. He was about to make another incantation gesture when Meng Hao arrived in front of him. Meng Hao's knee flew into the air, slamming directly into the young man's neck, whose head filled with a buzzing sound, and then an intense pain. The hand which had been making an incantation sign went limp, and his entire body bent to the side.

All of the blood in his body rushed to his head, making his once handsome face a dark reddish purple color. He opened his mouth to speak, his expression fearful and his body trembling. One can only imagine what he wished to say as he faced death.

He never spoke the words. Meng Hao stretched out his hand and used his fingernail to slice open the skin between the young man's eyebrows. His hand then made a strange gesture, and he pushed down.

A boom could be heard, and the young man's body flew backward like a kite with its string cut. All of the blood in his body, which had already gathered in his head, began to fountain out of the cut on his face. He couldn't even cry out. All he could see was blood, shooting out like a geyser from between his eyebrows. His pale body slammed into the ground and twitched a few times before lying still in death.

The blood that had shot out of his body seemed to be burning; it turned into a mist which then congealed into a drop the size of a fingernail. The drop of blood shot toward Meng Hao, who snatched it out of the air into his hand.

"Three generations of blood can form a small body; six generations of blood can form a full body, nine generations is called a Blood Spirit, or, death." Meng Hao spoke the words coolly. What he had just used on the violet-robed youth was none other than the Spirit Devouring Scripture.

“This violet robe indicates that he was a Chosen of the Black Sieve Sect. As a Chosen, he must have a powerful bloodline. He lifted up the blood and looked at it for a moment before putting it away. Then he looked down at the young man’s corpse. He picked up the bag of holding, as well as the violet-golden fruit which had been begging for mercy just now.

The violet-golden fruit quivered in Meng Hao’s hand as if it were alive and pleading for forgiveness.

“Meng Hao does not keep useless objects. What can you do? Show me.” He tossed the violet-gold fruit onto the ground. It immediately began to wriggle. Vines sprang out of it, quickly growing in length. In the space of about ten breaths, there were ten or more vines, all of them thirty meters in length. They burrowed partly into the ground and then stretched up into the air, swaying back and forth, filling the area. It was quite awe-inspiring.

“Not good enough,” said Meng Hao, shaking his head.

The tentacle vines trembled. Suddenly they bent, shooting toward the corpse of the violet-robed youth. Shockingly, it began to rip the corpse apart like a melon and swallow it down!

Meng Hao frowned as the vines consumed the body within the space of a few breaths. Then, each of the tentacles began to tremble and suddenly, leaves with glowing magical symbols began to sprout out. Meng Hao was quite shocked.

Not much time passed, and soon nearly one hundred leaves had appeared. The magical symbols drifted off of the vines and floated toward Meng Hao. They began to merge together to form a book of leaves!

Meng Hao took the book and flipped through it. His eyes filled with a bright light. The magical symbols were filled with the power of something similar to Spiritual Sense. After examining them closely, he realized that they described a technique.

It was called the Nineteen Black Cloud Strikes, and was the magical technique that the violet-robed young man had just now used to attempt to fight him.

Unfortunately, it wasn't complete. Only five of the strikes were described, whereas the rest were incomplete, missing various mnemonics. Perhaps the young man hadn't completely mastered the technique. Meng Hao studied it for a moment, his eyes narrowing. With his Perfect Dao Pillar, it wasn't difficult to deduce how to use the technique. After a while, he realized that the reason the manual wasn't complete was because the violet-gold vines were not powerful enough.

That having been said, he was still quite excited. He looked at the vines; if he allowed them to continue to develop, things would be different. He put away the book of leaves and nodded his head. He waved his sleeve, and a drop of blood flew out to descend onto the vines, branding them deeply. This blood seal was one of the random techniques that Meng Hao had acquired from the Blood Immortal Legacy.

The vines began to shake, and their color slowly changed. Soon, they were dark red, looking somewhat Demonic as they swayed in the air around Meng Hao. A Demonic Qi drifted up from them, although it was almost impossible to detect.

Meng Hao looked at the vines thoughtfully for some time, and then glanced back at the ruins up ahead of him. Taking up the violet-robed youth's bag of holding, he examined its contents. Amongst several jade slips was one that attracted his notice.

It was pure white, and after casting his Spiritual Sense into it, a map appeared in Meng Hao's mind. On the map were many white dots, all of which were moving....

In addition to the white dots, there were about two hundred gray dots, most of which were also moving.

"This is...." He observed the map for a bit before he was able to determine his location. Then, his attention was drawn to a place not far away from where he was. There, he could see three white dots, one in front, two in pursuit. The person in front was being chased!

He frowned, and his heart began to pound. He sent his Spiritual Sense into the first of the three glowing lights, and an image appeared in his

mind.

The image was none other than pale-faced Xu Qing. She was biting her lower lip and speeding forward as fast as possible.

In that instant, Meng Hao's killing intent rocketed to the sky. Studying the images of the two figures pursuing Xu Qing, he saw that one was the coquettish woman. She was being held by the playful looking young man named Zhao.

As soon as he saw this, a cold air began to emanate from Meng Hao's body, and his eyes shined brightly. The vines around him sensed his killing intent, and began to radiate the same aura of death.

Without the slightest hesitation, Meng Hao transformed into a beam of colourful light that shot toward Xu Qing's location. The swaying, red-colored vines followed, burrowing along on underneath the ground.

# Chapter 150: Simple and Uncomplicated

Zhao Shanhe was quite proud of himself. He held Xue Yuncui in one arm as he shot in pursuit of tender Xu Qing. A smile covered his face, filled with lechery.

He lifted his hand, sending a wind blowing past Xu Qing, lifting up her garments. He laughed loudly.

Seeing Xu Qing so stubborn and yet so weak filled him with excitement. He continued to send wind shooting over her, which caused more and more damage to her garments. She bit her lip as she fled. Soon, a feeling of desperation began to well up within her.

The fawning of Xue Yuncui coupled with the occasional vicious remarks uttered by Xu Qing caused Zhao Shanhe's eyes to shine even more brightly.

Yet, he wasn't in a hurry. It didn't seem to him that Xu Qing would fall into any luck like last time. She couldn't escape him, so he would enjoy the process of capturing her. That was what he liked the most. The weaker his prey, the more exciting it was. The more she struggled, the crueller he would be.

"Xu Qing, I've had my eye on you from the year you entered the Black Sieve Sect. I even spread the word about it. Why do you think no one has bothered you all these years? And yet, you continue to refuse my goodwill! You really don't know how to appreciate favors. You can't blame me for being ruthless." He let out a hearty laugh. Were he in the Sect, he would have more qualms about breaking Sect rules, especially because there were so many people around. However, in this place, he didn't have anything to be scared of.

Furthermore, he was a Conclave disciple of the Black Sieve Sect, which was a position even higher than the Inner Sect. He could really call the wind and summon rain among his fellow disciples. (TL note: this expression means "to stir up all sorts of trouble")

In addition to all that, one of the Patriarchs of his Zhao Clan was an

Elder of the Black Sieve Sect. Plus, several hundred years ago, a Zhao Clan member had reached the Nascent Soul stage and become a Sect Patriarch, then went into secluded meditation and still hadn't emerged. Because of that Nascent Soul Patriarch, the Zhao Clan was deeply entrenched within the Black Sieve Sect.

Actually, despite being a Conclave disciple, Zhao Shanhe did not have extraordinary latent talent. No other person in the Sect with his latent talent would ever have been able to reach Foundation Establishment. However, with the support and direction of a Core Formation Patriarch, along with multiple Foundation Establishment Pills, he was finally able to do it.

After becoming a Foundation Establishment Cultivator, Zhao Shanhe was quite pleased with himself. He had grown up in the Sect, and other than a few people who could not be provoked, everyone must bend to his will. If he wanted wind, it was windy. If he wanted rain, it was rainy.

Within the Zhao Clan, there were two sons of the current generation. One was him, the other was from another branch of the Zhao Clan, his cousin, Zhao Binwu.

Like him, Zhao Binwu was a Conclave disciple. In terms of latent talent, his was above and beyond Zhao Shanhe, and he was viewed as an important member of the Clan to be nurtured. Zhao Shanhe was well aware of this, of course, and didn't get involved with rivalries with him. Instead, he immersed himself in pleasure. Normally, if he fancied a female disciple in the Sect, she wouldn't refuse him. After all, even if she wasn't willing, refusing him was useless.

The Patriarchs didn't pay attention to such matters. If anything, he could expand the clan. In any case, if a female disciple really did get pregnant, she would instantly be in a much higher position than before.

Due to a variety of lucky circumstances, Zhao Shanhe was like a spoiled rich kid within the Sect. He wasn't very well known in the outside world, but within the Sect he was quite infamous.

"Look, the stars are out. It's almost time. We can use the stars as our



wedding candles, and this place will serve as nuptial chamber. What do you say?" He laughed again, lifting a finger to send another blast of wind at Xu Qing.

Her body trembled and blood seeped from her mouth. Actually, Zhao Shanhe had to carefully control the spiritual energy he used, otherwise it would kill her.

As her body quivered, the colorful cloud beneath her feet suddenly fell apart. Xu Qing fell down to the ground. Laughing melodically, Xue Yuncui shot forward and grabbed her, shoving her down into the dirt. Xu Qing couldn't even struggle.

Her face was pale, and her features somewhat wan. However coldness filled her eyes as she watched Zhao Shanhe walking over, untying his robe as he came. A look of desperation filled her, and she tried to bit off her tongue, but Xue Yuncui restrained her jaw.

"Now now, Junior Sister Xu, you can't do that. If you really want to kill yourself, you'll have to wait until Elder Brother Zhao is done having fun." Xue Yuncui laughed. Her words were spoken tenderly, but were filled with sinister viciousness.

"Excellent, excellent," laughed Zhao Shanhe, looking appreciatively at Xue Yuncui. He stroked her face, which caused her eyes to shine. It seemed his approval was very stimulating to her.

Zhao Shanhe looked at Xu Qing, who was helplessly pinned against the ground by Xue Yuncui. His gaze roved over her lithe curves, and he laughed.

"If I gave you some medicinal pills," he said, "then I wouldn't be able to enjoy the struggle. So of course I won't give you any." His robe was now completely untied.

Xu Qing's body quivered, and tears seeped out of her eyes. She couldn't struggle. Xue Yuncui's Cultivation base was higher than hers. Plus, she was exhausted from fleeing, and was being held down tightly. There was no way to flee.

The coldness on her face dissipated, replaced with bitterness and desperation. Her eyes emptied. Suddenly, it seemed she could see the Reliance Sect, and Meng Hao, standing on the East Mountain. She thought of Mount Daqing, and the young scholar stooping down and tossing a rattan vine over a cliff.

She remembered the first time she saw Meng Hao 1. She had been standing behind him as he searched for rattan vines. She watched him throw the vine down the cliff, and had heard him talking about Immortals to the people below.

At that time, she'd thought that this mortal scholar was very interesting. Thus, she'd taken him with her.

She thought about the stares of the crowd 2 when Meng Hao had offered her the medicinal pill.... And she thought about how he had gazed back at her right before he entered the black door.

"It's all over...." The streaming tears made her face seem very bleak. She couldn't stop herself from shaking. She was scared. From the day she had left the Reliance Sect until now, she had not experienced any happiness. And now, it seemed everything was coming to an end.

When she was a little girl, she had realized that she wasn't very intelligent, and in fact, sometimes very foolish. Therefore, she had mastered the ability to cover it up with a cold smile. She used coldness and silence to conceal her lack of intelligence, and to make the world a bit simpler.

She didn't like complicated things, because she often didn't understand them. She liked peace and quiet. She liked to practice Cultivation by herself. As she did so, she watched the years passed, watched her life ebb, and recalled beautiful memories from the past.

This was her. Xu Qing. A cold exterior, and a simple heart.

She tried hard not to cry. Her body shook, and she closed her eyes. She didn't want to look at Zhao Shanhe and his overwhelming strength. She was simply a Qi Condensation Cultivator in a Sect where happiness was unachievable. She had no strength to resist... nor even the ability to die.

As she closed her eyes, Xue Yuncui laughed and then spoke into her ear, her voice cool and complex. “Hey, you can’t fight back, so just close your eyes. That’s what I did all those years back. If you want to blame something, blame your aloofness, and blame your Cultivation base. You’re just too weak....”

Zhao Shanhe’s laughter echoed out. He waved his right hand, and a pink glow spread out. It enveloped the entire area within a thirty meter radius, creating a glimmering, pink shield that concealed everything within. The three of them were completely hidden. From the outside, the area didn’t look unusual at all.

At the same time that the cloaking shield went up, a fiery beam of light shot across the sky nearby. It screamed through the air, a cold-faced Meng Hao in its middle.

He arrived in the blink of an eye, his gaze sweeping the land. He frowned. There didn’t seem to be anything unusual at all in the area. He was about to leave, when his eyes flashed. He took out the jade slip and examined it. It was then that he noticed that the white dot representing Xu Qing, as well as the two others, had vanished.

He wasn’t sure why, but a feeling of deep unrest rose up in his heart. He looked down at the ground, and then waved his hand. As he did, a thirty meter long Flame Dragon roared out, shooting downward. A boom sounded out, and dust rose up from the ground.

However, there was one area, about thirty meters in diameter, from which no dust rose up whatsoever. It was clearly different from its surroundings.

Zhao Shanhe was concealed inside the shield, looking pleased. He licked his lips and his eyes shone as he prepared to throw himself upon Xu Qing. Suddenly, a boom could be heard from outside. He frowned, looking up, his pupils constricting.

Xue Yuncui also looked up in astonishment. She reacted to the situation quickly. Almost reflexively, she pulled out a sharp sword and placed it against Xu Qing’s neck.

This was because she had seen a young man outside wearing a black scholar's robe. His eyes glowed with killing intent, and as he lifted his hand, she could see that one of his fingers was coated with blood. He touched the surface of the shield, and an explosion shook everything. He opened his mouth, and a mist of lightning roiled out, slamming into the pink shield.

Another explosion rocked the earth and sky, echoing out. The shield couldn't withstand the power, and collapsed in a boom. In the midst of her despair, Xu Qing opened her eyes. She stared blankly as the shield disintegrated. Beyond where the shield was breaking apart, she saw a person. Killing intent and murder boiled off of him. Behind his body writhed a mass of dark red vines!

He looked like a Death Immortal who had just emerged from the yellow springs of the netherworld, filled with rage and insanity. As he approached, a massive wind kicked up that shook everything.

"Are you two ... looking to die?!?!" It didn't seem possible for Meng Hao's voice to contain more fury than it did. It came out as a roar that filled their ears, as if it had been transmitted from hell itself!

"Meng Hao...." said Xu Qing, smiling. Her smile was beautiful, and didn't contain any of her usual coldness. It was a simple smile.

Simple and happy.

1. "The first time Xu Qing met Meng Hao" was in Chapter 1: Scholar Meng Hao
2. "She thought about the stares of the crowdstares of the crowd" was from Chapter 5: This Kid isn't Bad

# Chapter 151: I'll Do It Myself

The dark red vines seemed to have been infected by Meng Hao's fury. They whipped about wildly, creating a buzzing noise. Dust rose from the ground like a fog, obscuring Meng Hao's figure.

His black scholar's robe now looked a bit faded. Long hair whipped around him, and killing intent, fueled by his intense anger, rose to the heavens. This killing aura was poles apart from Meng Hao's usual disposition.

Veins of blood filled his eyes. He saw Xu Qing's helplessness, her bitterness, her pale beauty, and then the simple smile that broke out on her face. That smile became Meng Hao's everything.

Meng Hao loved her. It was the youthful love that comes from looking at a pretty girl. A simple love. After the dissolution of the Reliance Sect, they had been separated by an entire world. Now that they could see each other again, the years that had passed didn't seem very long after all, almost like a dream.

Seven or eight years ago, you were a cold, a young girl who stood beneath the moon and accepted the Cosmetic Cultivation Pill. Now, seven or eight years later, here you are, your face pale, but smiling.

Seven or eight years ago I was a scholar standing on Mount Daqing who threw a gourd bottle down the mountain. You will never know the promise I placed in that gourd bottle.

Seven or eight years later, here I stand, my killing intent billowing to the Heavens. The road behind me doesn't stretch very far, but it is filled with the bones of Cultivators.

Seven or eight years....

For mortals, many things can change in seven or eight years. For Cultivators, seven or eight years is not a long time; but then again, Cultivators all begin life as mortals. Meng Hao was no longer the scholar he had been seven or eight years ago, but the memories from that time

still remained. He would never forget those years.

He gazed at Xu Qing and smiled. His smile contained warmth, and the happiness of seeing someone again for the first time in a long while. It lasted until he looked upon the trembling man surnamed Zhao who stood there pale-faced, his robe hanging loose on his body.

Zhao Shanhe felt as if Meng Hao's eyes were two sharp swords stabbing into his own eyes. The gaze entered his head, causing his mind to tremble. It pierced his blood and flesh, grinding against his bones and stabbing into his Qi passageways. It stabbed all the way to his Dao Pillar.

His Dao Pillar was filled with cracks; he obviously had a Fractured Foundation. The Dao Pillar shook violently, as if Meng Hao's gaze would cause it to crumble to pieces. Zhao Shanhe was frightened out of his mind.

"Fellow... Fellow Daoist, sir, I'm Zhao Shanhe, a Conclave disciple of the Black Sieve Sect. Fellow Daoist...." His tongue quivered as he spoke. He might be a rich kid, but he wasn't stupid. The pink shield from just now was a treasure that could only be broken by the late Foundation Establishment stage. And yet Meng Hao, who seemed to be at the early Foundation Establishment stage, had crushed it.

He also saw Meng Hao's frigid killing aura. It was powerfully intense, something that he had never actually seen before in his entire life.

"You're surnamed Zhao?" Meng Hao said coolly, beginning to a step forward. "I just killed another guy surnamed Zhao. His name was Zhao Binwu." Meng Hao had acquired Zhao Binwu's name from the identification medallion in his bag of holding.

As he took his first step, it felt to Zhao Shanhe as if Meng Hao was stepping directly onto his heart. His heart pounded, filling with a difficult to describe pain, deep inside.

It was then that Meng Hao's words from just now registered in Zhao Shanhe's mind. A thunder-like roaring filled him, and his body shivered. He unconsciously took a step backward. Meng Hao's gaze swept over him, filled with an incredible pressure. Zhao Shanhe's mind reeled again, and his trembling body lost the ability to move. Facing Meng Hao, his

Cultivation base seemed completely incapable of producing even the smallest amount of power.

This was crushing pressure!

Meng Hao released the full power of his Perfect Dao Pillar, creating a pressure that could crush down upon any Foundation Establishment Dao Pillar!

This was an innate ability of a Perfect Foundation. Because the Perfect Foundation struggles with the Heavens over spiritual energy, it has the ability to emit crushing pressure on all other Foundation Establishment Cultivation bases!

Amidst his trembling, Zhao Shanhe's expression flickered. Meng Hao took a second step, and as the step descended, Zhao Shanhe's face grew deathly pale. Blood oozed out of his mouth, and an intense dread crept into his eyes.

"Fellow Daoist... if... if you want to talk...." His entire body shook, but even as he tried to speak, Meng Hao took a third step. He stomped down; Zhao Shanhe's spirit shook and he coughed up a mouthful of blood. The Dao Pillar within him was unable to withstand the pressure exuded by Meng Hao. A large fissure sliced all the way through it!

More fissures grew, spreading out to fill the entire Dao Pillar. The blood drained completely from Zhao Shanhe's face, and his eyes filled with anguish. Trembling, he was just about to use all the power he could muster to fight back, when Meng Hao, face blank, took his fourth step, which was filled with powerful killing intent.

The instant the fourth step descended, the roaring within Zhao Shanhe rose to the Heavens. His heart suddenly stopped beating for a moment. All of his organs seemed to slow as the cracks spread throughout his Dao Pillar until suddenly... it disintegrated!!

The Dao Pillar disintegrated!

When that happened, Zhao Shanhe let out a bloodcurdling shriek that was unlike anything that had emerged from his mouth before. He coughed

up seven or eight mouthfuls of blood, and then began to wither and shrink. Cold sweat poured out of him, and his face was ashen. His body could suddenly move again, but all that he was able to do was retreat backward.

Before he could move backward very far, Meng Hao took a fifth step, and now he was standing in front of Zhao Shanhe. His knee flew up, not toward Zhao Shanhe's neck, but directly between his legs!

Pop pop!

The intense pain caused Zhao Shanhe to double over, screaming. Even as he screamed, Meng Hao's right hand shot up and clamped onto his neck. The scream now existed only within Zhao Shanhe's throat, with no way to emerge out.

He could only whimper as his face began to turn a dark purple color. Unable to speak, unable to scream, the pain seemed to grow ten times worse.

His eyes bulged, filled with insanity, and his body twitched. He suddenly wanted to fight back.

But... he couldn't resist. He was powerless to even struggle, unable to even utter threats. His body shook, filled with pain. He was like a mortal, his Dao Pillar destroyed, his Cultivation base in ruins.

"Stop!" cried a trembling voice. It was Xue Yuncui, who was still next to Xu Qing. Her body shook and her face was pale. But she still held the sword at Xu Qing's neck, seemingly ready to stab it in at any moment.

To her, Meng Hao appeared to be some sort of devilish fiend, cruel and ruthless. It caused the blood to drain from her face, and she didn't dare to even look him in the eye. Regret welled up from within her heart, but it was too late. She could only beg for him to let her go.

"You're Meng Hao, right? I've heard Xu Qing talk about you and the Reliance Sect.... This is all just a misunderstanding. I just want to leave...." Her voice trembled as she looked toward Meng Hao. Even though she held a sword, she was actually the frightened one.



“I used to be a scholar,” he said coolly. He continued to hold Zhao Shanhe up by the neck, but turned to look at Xue Yuncui. His voice was soft as he continued, “Once I read an ancient text that was said to be from the Great Tang in the Eastern Lands. It described thousands of bizarre execution methods. There was one that, after I read about it, caused me to have nightmares for days.” Eyes filled with loathing, he reached up with his left hand and grabbed one of Zhao Shanhe’s fingers. One by one, he crushed the bones of the fingers of both hands. Then his arms. Then his shoulders. Then the rest of his body.

Zhao Shanhe wanted to pass out from the intense pain, but couldn’t, not with Meng Hao there. Time passed for as long as it takes an incense stick to burn. Finally, Meng Hao twisted his right hand. A popping sound rang out as Zhao Shanhe’s neck was snapped.

The entire time, he was unable to utter a single cry. Such was his death....

Meng Hao dropped Zhao Shanhe’s body and then looked at Xue Yuncui. “How do you want to die? I’ll let you decide.”

Her face was completely pale, like a corpse’s. Her body trembled, as did the sword she held in her hand. She looked at Meng Hao, and dread welled up within her. This was like the worst nightmare she had ever experienced.

“You... Don’t you force me!!” she cried. Even as the words left her mouth, the ground beneath her feet exploded up. A dark red vine snaked out, wrapping around her body and sending the sword spinning into the air. Meng Hao flicked a sleeve to knock it twenty-five or so meters away. The vines circulated around Xue Yuncui, their mouths wide and seemingly dripping with saliva, just waiting for Meng Hao’s command, whereupon they would consume her.

“Don’t kill her...” said Xu Qing quietly, struggling to her feet. She looked at Meng Hao. “I want to do it myself. I’ve been wanting to cut her tongue out for years.” Gritting her teeth, she retrieved Xue Yuncui’s sword. The vines lowered Xue Yuncui toward her.

“Junior Sister Xu... I....” She faced Xu Qing, trembling, an imploring look on her face.

Xu Qing, her face cold, lifted the sword and stabbed it slowly into her mouth. Xue Yuncui’s screams echoed out.

Xu Qing leaned forward and whispered into her ear: “You can’t fight back, so just close your eyes and enjoy it. I’ve always wanted to tell you, you are the slut!” She twisted the sword in her hand. After the space of about ten breaths, Xue Yuncui stopped struggling. Xu Qing stabbed the sword in even deeper.

# Chapter 152: Words Under the Moon With An Old Companion

Xu Qing looked at Xue Yuncui as she stabbed the sword all the way through her head. Then she stepped back, pale faced. Xue Yuncui slipped into death, and Xu Qing stood there silently.

Meng Hao looked at her and then walked up next to her. Together, they sat down. The vines dragged Xue Yuncui's body down into the ground and began to devour it.

The moon hung high in the sky, and everything was quiet. No one had noticed the ripples of battle magic; after all, this Blessed Land was a very large place.

"First time?" asked Meng Hao. Their shadows overlapped in the moonlight.

She was quiet for a while before nodding.

"The first time I killed someone, my heart was troubled for quite a while," he said softly. As he looked at her, images from the Reliance Sect floated into his mind.

A breeze passed by, cleaning away the stench of blood. Xu Qing's hair curled up, brushing against Meng Hao's face. It was hard to tell whether it wrapped around his face, or his heart.

"Was it after the Sect disbanded?" asked Xu Qing, turning her head to look at him. Her face was pale, but to Meng Hao, it was beautiful.

He remembered the night years ago when he had escorted her back to the East Mountain. As he'd watched her walking away from him, he'd thought to himself that he wouldn't mind marrying her 1.

It was a memory from years ago, such a long time ago. It was hard to determine whether or not it was simply the idling of youth.

"Actually, it was inside the Sect," said Meng Hao with a smile. He felt relaxed. This Blessed Land was a dangerous place, but for some reason he

felt at ease, as if he were back in the Reliance Sect, on top of the East Mountain, standing beneath the moon.

“Oh?” said Xu Qing, looking shocked. She stared at Meng Hao, temporarily forgetting to cover her face with coldness.

To Meng Hao, her blank look was filled with beauty. It was very different from the Elder Sister Xu from his memories. Coldness was unapproachable; but her numb look now made her seem very dear.

Meng Hao laughed.

“I suddenly have the feeling I never understood the real you, Elder Sister,” he said with a smile, looking at her. He was no longer the scholar he once had been. He had experienced many things, and had grown through the years. In terms of both experience and wisdom, he had matured a lot. He was now able to tell that the coldness exhibited by Xu Qing was intentional.

He looked over her, catching sight of the milky white skin beneath the rips in her clothing. This was not the first time he’d seen a woman in such a position, but for some reason, when he’d looked at Chu Yuyan, he could remain calm. Seeing Xu Qing now, though, a different look filled his eyes.

Xu Qing’s gaze met Meng Hao’s for a moment, and then she looked away, her heart pounding. A flush appeared on her face, and she gripped her garment tightly in her fists. She was clearly nervous.

Meng Hao coughed lightly, and then slapped his bag of the Cosmos, producing a set of clothes which he began to place around her shoulders.

She said nothing, allowing him to cover her up. She lifted her beautiful face to look at the moon. As the moonlight shone onto her, Meng Hao looked at her hair and her lovely features. They were so delicate it seemed as if the wind might cause them to break.

“You killed someone in the Sect? Who?” Xu Qing tried to pretend she didn’t notice Meng Hao looking at her, but her flush had deepened.

“An Outer Sect disciple surnamed Zhao,” said Meng Hao, recalling Elder Brother Zhao’s horrific death by the copper mirror. “He wanted to take the

Immortal's Cave you gave me.”

“You’ve really got guts,” she said, turning her head and shifting her gaze from the moon to Meng Hao. “You actually killed someone inside the Sect.” Her words were spoken in earnest, and with the earnestness came her usual coldness. However, Meng Hao could see the uncomplicated simplicity beneath the coldness.

“Well... actually I didn’t just kill one person,” he said with a light cough.

“Oh?” Elder Sister Xu stared mutely again for a long moment. It was as if she were meeting him for the first time. She looked him over carefully, thinking for a while. “So you got used to it?” She hastily added: “What I mean is, after killing so much, did you stop feeling uneasy at heart?”

“Let’s talk about something else,” said Meng Hao. He could tell that she was very curious about the matter. But for a man and a woman to sit under the moon talking about killing people didn’t quite seem appropriate.

“Oh,” she said, nodding, looking at him. Her coldness concealed her true personality, but at the moment, she suddenly didn’t know what to say.

“I want to show you something.” Meng Hao tapped his bag of the Cosmos, and the Cosmetic Cultivation Pill appeared in his hand. With a smile, he handed it out to Elder Sister Xu.

When she saw the pill, she stared in shock. Her eyes were fixed on the pill as she slowly raised her hand and took it from him. Then she closed her eyes.

It was impossible to tell what she was thinking inside. After a moment, she opened her eyes and looked at Meng Hao for a long, long time.

This was the third time Meng Hao had given her a Cosmetic Cultivation Pill.

She put it away quietly, then softly said, “A few years ago I heard that the State of Zhao... disappeared.”

Meng Hao sighed. Then, he proceeded to explain to her about Patriarch

Reliance. She sat there underneath the moon, listening intently. When he told her that Patriarch Reliance was actually a gargantuan, vicious turtle, her mouth dropped open and a look of disbelief covered her face. To Meng Hao, she was truly beautiful. He suddenly stopped talking.

This in turn caused Xu Qing to look into his eyes. When their eyes met, she suddenly turned and stared off into the distance, her heart racing. She was experiencing a strange feeling, and a strange nervousness. She felt an emotion she wasn't familiar with. In all honesty, she didn't mind; actually she liked it a bit.

"I've seen Elder Brother Chen a few times..." she suddenly said, not sure what to talk about. "This place is an ancient Blessed Land.... Oh, right, how can your Cultivation base possibly be at the Foundation Establishment stage...?"

Meng Hao looked at her, a warm smile growing on his face.

"What was the situation with Zhao Shanhe?" he asked lightly.

"He was a Conclave disciple of the Black Sieve Sect," she replied, a look of disgust appearing in her eyes. "His Clan has deep roots in the Sect. He was shameless and disgusting. Over the past few years, he used Foundation Establishment Pills as bait to force himself on numerous female disciples...."

"Foundation Establishment Pills...." He looked at her for a moment. He could tell that she had completed the circle of nine Qi Condensation levels. With a Foundation Establishment Pill, she could definitely go into secluded meditation and reach Foundation Establishment.

"That type of pill is very valuable," she said, a dismal look on her face. "It's even hard for Inner Sect disciples to get one. You can only acquire one with the support of someone of the senior generation, or if you perform some special service for the Sect. Or possibly if you have amazing latent talent.

"After Patriarch Zhen brought me to the Black Sieve Sect, she completely ignored me. However, my personality was similar to a Core Formation Cultivator of the senior generation, so she took me in as a disciple. She

promised to give me a Foundation Establishment Pill, but she left for the sect a few years ago and has never returned. According to the rumors, she's dead...."

Meng Hao slapped his bag of the Cosmos. Instantly, three Foundation Establishment Pills appeared in his hand. He held them out to her.

"I have some Foundation Establishment Pills," he said.

Xu Qing stared wordlessly at the three pills. She was shocked, never having imagined that Meng Hao would have a Foundation Establishment Pill, let alone three. These three pills would cause a riot if they appeared within the Black Sieve Sect.

"Those..." Xu Qing breathed even harder when she saw the symbol etched into the side of the pills. Her eyes widened. "Those were concocted by Grandmaster Pill Demon."

"I only have three. But if it's not enough, then I can get some more for you when we get out of here." He smiled, placing the pills into Xu Qing's hand. To anyone else, these pills would be incredibly valuable.

"It's enough, really. One... maybe two is probably enough." She was about to say more when Meng Hao closed her hand over the pills.

"I don't need them. You take them. If you need, I can stand guard for you when you use them."

"Unless you've been at the ninth level of Qi Condensation for dozens of years, are completely prepared, and have refined your body to the extreme, then you would need several months at the least. This place isn't appropriate. I'll wait till I get back to the Sect and find an appropriate place to break through." She gave him a deep look. "You can't stay here for too long, Meng Hao. You need to be careful. The Black Sieve Sect has known about the existence of this place for a long time, but hasn't been able to enter. Recently, though, they came across an ancient map.

"With the map, they were able to open the entrance. Originally, this was an ancient Blessed Land, but over the years it has changed, and is now a land of death."

Meng Hao's eyes glistened as he listened to her explanation.

“Supposedly, it has something to do with an ancient, violent Spirit. I'm not really sure what it is, and there are lots of rumours in the Sect about it. Although, I can tell you that the reason they've gathered so many rogue Foundation Establishment Cultivators is not to acquire treasures, but to create a Hundred Spirits Tower!

“It's not a big secret to the Inner Sect disciples, and even some in the Outer Sect know about it, but they don't care about rogue Cultivators. Actually, there are even a few amongst the rogue Cultivators who know about it.

“The Hundred Spirits Tower is actually quite simple to describe. Basically, by using a variety of magical Cultivation techniques, one hundred Dao Pillars are refined together to create the Hundred Spirits Tower.

“The purpose of creating the tower is top secret. I don't think even the Inner Sect disciples know about it. Amongst the Conclave disciples, only two or three even know a little bit.” This was everything Xu Qing knew regarding the activities in the Blessed Land.

Suddenly, a massive roaring could be heard from somewhere off in the distance.

The instant the sound echoed out, the ground in the Blessed Land suddenly began to quake violently. At the same time, a mysterious suction force came into being. Meng Hao's eyes flickered. He felt the Dao Pillars within him trembling, as if something were trying to pull them out of him.

If you want to review Meng Hao's musings about marrying Xu Qing, re-read Chapter 13: Manly Cao Yang ←



# Chapter 153: Barring the Way

Meng Hao's expression changed in a flash. His Cultivation base circulated, and intense power from his Perfect Dao Pillars expanded out to resist the suction force.

Xu Qing didn't react whatsoever at first. But when she saw the expression on Meng Hao's face, she suddenly started to look anxious and worried.

The roaring sound echoed across the land, affecting not just Meng Hao, but all of the rogue Foundation Establishment Cultivators within the Blessed Land. Each and every one of them, regardless of what they were doing at the moment, immediately sat down cross-legged to meditate.

However, in rapid succession, the bodies of multiple rogue Cultivators exploded, sending flesh and blood showering in all directions. Only their Dao Pillars were left intact. They flew through the air, dragged toward the location of the suction force.

The Dao Pillars flew toward what turned out to be a mountain range. Some powerful force had worn down a section of the mountains, so that it was sunken in. In the sunken area was a black tower.

From the looks of it, it wasn't completely finished being constructed. There were currently three levels. From all directions, multiple Dao Pillars flew toward it and began to form the fourth layer!

When the fourth layer was completed, the suction power grew weaker and then disappeared. Over thirty rogue Cultivators had died just now in the Blessed Land.

This shocking event instantly struck fear into the hearts of all the other rogue Cultivators. However, they were stuck inside. No matter where or how they searched, they would not be able to find any exits.

The area where the suction force originated from was surrounded by nearly one thousand Black Sieve Sect disciples, sitting cross-legged, chanting bizarre scriptural texts. The Black Sect disciples who had entered

the Blessed Land in random places were all rushing toward this area.

Meng Hao opened his eyes, and they gleamed with a mysterious light. He glanced toward the area where the roar and the suction force had come from. His Dao Pillars were now stable. They were Perfect Dao Pillars, so even though the suction force was not small, it was far from being dangerous to him.

Seeing Meng Hao's pale face, Xu Qing quickly said, "That is the gathering place for the Black Sieve Sect disciples. All disciples were informed before entering to go to that place as quickly as possible. When we get there, we have to chant some scripture, although I don't know why.

"I know of an exit. Including last time, I've been here twice now. I can take you there and you can leave this place. You can't stay here."

Meng Hao didn't say anything. He stood, looking off toward where the suction force had originated. After a long moment, he shook his head.

"The suction force doesn't affect me very much. And I have a way to leave here. As for you, though..." He looked back at her. "If that suction force hadn't appeared, it would be fine. But now, the rogue Cultivators will know something strange is going on. They'll be looking for Black Sieve Sect disciples to explain what's going on. Who knows what methods they will use to force out the information. Furthermore, if you know about that exit, then others will too. The people from the Black Sieve Sect wouldn't be so careless." He looked at Xu Qing, who had existed in his memories for so long as Elder Sister.

"We haven't seen each other for such a long time, I'd hoped we could spend some more time alone together," he said quietly. "But now is not the time. I'll escort you to the Black Sieve Sect rendezvous point. You will be much safer there."

"You really have a way to get out of here?" Xu Qing asked, her tone serious.

"Really," replied Meng Hao just as seriously.

Xu Qing looked quietly at him for a moment, and it seemed as if she

wanted to say something. Before she could, Meng Hao stepped forward and wrapped his arm around her supple waist, then flew up into the sky.

Gale force winds blew about, but they were blocked by Meng Hao's Cultivation base. All Xu Qing could feel was Meng Hao holding her. Her face reddened again.

Her black hair drifted next to his face, filled with a delicate, unforgettable fragrance. Xu Qing didn't say anything as they sped along. In the past, she had been his Elder Sister. But he no longer exhibited any of the weakness he had as her Junior Brother. He was a Foundation Establishment Cultivator. The way he had slaughtered Zhao Shanhe was evidence of the incredible changes he had experienced throughout the years.

As Meng Hao breathed in her delicate fragrance, she also could smell him. It made her feel safe, like she was home.

She suddenly thought back to Mount Daqing, and the young scholar Meng Hao. She had carried him away to the Reliance Sect in much the same fashion as he was holding her now, pressed up against him.

A smile appeared in her eyes as she thought of this. She looked up at Meng Hao's profile and time seemed to slow down.

She didn't understand what she was feeling, but she knew that right now, everything was peaceful. Suddenly she had the feeling that Meng Hao really was like her younger brother.

"You grew up," she said suddenly. She wasn't quite sure why she said it, but she did.

Hearing this, Meng Hao suddenly stopped flying for a moment and smiled wryly. Her face was covered with a cold look of seeming indifference, but it was obviously an act.

"I think you're a few years older than me...." he said, clearing his throat.

"Five years older!" she said seriously. "I'm your Elder Sister!"

"That's no big deal." Seeing her wide-eyed look, he laughed and added,

“Okay, okay, I never said you’re not my Elder Sister.”

Time passed, enough for an incense stick to burn. Suddenly, eight beams of light appeared in front of them. Before the two of them could pass, the people caught sight of them.

“Qi Condensation.... That woman is a Black Sieve Sect disciple!”

“Yeah, she must be. She’s just what we’ve been looking for!” All of them were Cultivators of the early Foundation Establishment stage. Their eyes glittered viciously as their gazes shifted from Xu Qing to Meng Hao.

A blue-robed, middle-aged man amongst them looked coldly at Meng Hao and said, “Fellow Daoist, there’s no need to tell us what this woman told you. We want her, now!” It seemed that if Meng Hao didn’t comply, the man would attack.

Every person in their midst had hostile looks in their eyes. The suction power that had appeared had scared them witless, so they had decided to search for lone Black Sieve Sect disciples to extract information from.

Now that they had found one, they wouldn’t give her up easily.

Xu Qing started to pant with nervousness, unconsciously tightening her grip on Meng Hao’s robes. To her, these eight Foundation Establishment Cultivators had incredibly high Cultivation bases. Considering hers, she wouldn’t be able to resist even one of them.

“Screw off!” said Meng Hao coolly. He didn’t stop flying for even a second but continued to shoot directly toward them. Xu Qing was getting even more nervous. She had seen him dispatch Zhao Shanhe, but at the moment, they were facing eight people. She couldn’t help but be worried.

When he heard Meng Hao’s words, the blue-robed man laughed. Killing intent sprang up in his eyes. Meng Hao’s Cultivation base was at the early Foundation Establishment stage, just like he himself, and he had seven others backing him up. Considering Meng Hao was a single person, there shouldn’t even be a need to begin fighting. And yet, Meng Hao had unexpectedly dared to rave wildly.

Cold smiles broke out on the faces of the seven other Cultivators. In

their minds, Meng Hao was simply talking big.

However, even as the blue-robed man lifted his hand to begin an incantation gesture and the seven others began to take out various magical items, Meng Hao opened his mouth. The lightning mist exploded out, and before any of the eight of them could react, it had enveloped them. The earth below showered up as a dozen dark red vines shot upward. They screamed up savagely, directly into the midst of the lightning mist.

Miserable, ear-piercing screams echoed out from within. They sounded like the cries emitted just before death. Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever as, holding Xu Qing in his arms, he continued on flying. The lightning mist wrapped up the bags of holding and delivered them to Meng Hao, who tucked them away. The vines burrowed back into the ground. As for the eight Cultivators, they were nowhere to be seen.

The quick and efficient dispatching of the eight Cultivators didn't phase Meng Hao at all. But Xu Qing sucked in a breath. Meng Hao had grown up to an astonishing degree.

He continued to fly along at high speed. They were getting closer to the origin of the suction force. Along the way, they ran into single Cultivators, or occasionally groups of three to five. In total, they ran into ten early Foundation Establishment stage Cultivators. None of them was able to obstruct Meng Hao's progress in the least bit.

Soon, they were very close to the Black Sieve Sect rendezvous point. Behind Meng Hao appeared two beams of light which emanated the power of the mid Foundation Establishment stage. If that were the extent of it, it wouldn't be a big deal. But at the same time, ahead of Meng Hao appeared another beam. Inside was an old man. This was the same old man with whom Meng Hao had entered the Black Sieve Sect. He was of the late Foundation Establishment stage.

He stopped several hundred meters in front of Meng Hao. The man's cold gaze fell upon Xu Qing.

"Fellow Daoist, I have been waiting here for quite some time waiting to

see a Black Sieve Sect disciple. Hand the woman over to me.”

The two mid Foundation Establishment Cultivators came to a stop behind Meng Hao and Xu Qing, who were now completely surrounded.

The two mid Foundation Establishment Cultivators were middle-aged. Their eyes were dour, and they radiated a cold aura along with significant killing intent. They were clearly vicious and cruel.

“What do you want to know?” said Meng Hao coolly. “I can tell you.” Xu Qing’s face was wan as she rested in his embrace. Without him there, she would definitely have been captured and interrogated by rogue Cultivators. Along the way, she had seen several Black Sieve Sect disciples who had been captured and questioned using various methods.

But rogue Cultivators were rogue Cultivators. They wouldn’t easily give up information when asked. After all, that information could be life-saving to them; by telling others, it could reduce their own chances and deliver both parties to death.

“I’m not used to listening to what others have to say,” said the old man calmly. “I only trust the results of my own handiwork.” The power of the late Foundation Establishment Cultivation base emanated out, sending massive pressure down onto Meng Hao.

# Chapter 154: To Each His Own Path

Meng Hao didn't respond. He looked down at Xu Qing and gave her a little smile. He retreated backward with her, causing the late Foundation Establishment old man to snort and then fly forward toward Meng Hao like a nightingale.

His speed was incredible, and he displayed the full power of his late Foundation Establishment Cultivation base, causing eight ripples to spread out in the air. He obviously had eight Dao Pillars within his body.

By this point, Meng Hao had already reached the two mid Foundation Establishment stage middle-aged Cultivators. They laughed, and one of them flashed incantation gestures. A hundred Ice Blades magically appeared and began to spin, forming a giant whirlwind. The whirlwind shot toward Meng Hao, each blade within filled with the power of the early Foundation Establishment stage.

The other man slapped his bag of holding to produce five black, buzzing, head-sized wasps with long, red stingers.

"You overestimate yourself!" said the man who had created the Ice Blades. The Ice Blade whirlwind screamed toward Meng Hao. Holding Xu Xing with his right arm, he waved his left hand. Instantly, an enormous Flame Dragon appeared, along with a Wind Blade. Shockingly, the Flame Dragon was not pure red, but streaked with gold! Because of the Sublime Spirit Scripture, the dragon had become a Golden Dragon.

The Wind Blade fused with the dragon, causing it to expand to three hundred meters in length. Furthermore, two bulges appeared on the left and right side of the Flame Dragon bulged. As soon as the Wind Blade touched the dragon, they exploded out into two enormous wings. It unfurled the wings; this was a Flying Rain-Dragon.

Meng Hao had been enlightened regarding this technique when the roc had awakened the Flying Rain-Dragon Legacy within him.

The next thing to appear with the Dragon was a Flame Sea. This Flame Sea was birthed from the power of the Perfect Dao Pillar. Mid Foundation

Establishment Cultivators simply had no way to resist it.

Boom!

The Ice Blade whirlwind broke apart in an instant, transforming into a mist which was consumed by the Flame Sea. The flaming Flying Rain-Dragon roared. The two mid Foundation Establishment stage Cultivators retreated, looks of shock on their face. In the blink of an eye, the Flying Rain-Dragon shot forward and consumed one of them in a single bite.

A miserable scream echoed out as his body was transformed into ash.

All of this happened in the time it takes a spark to rise off of a piece of flint. Neither the old man of the late Foundation Establishment stage nor the man with the five wasps had time to react before it was over.

Face expressionless, Meng Hao turned and strode directly toward the five ferocious buzzing wasps.

They shot toward him, but as they neared, their bodies suddenly began to tremble violently. It seemed as if they had sensed something frightening and didn't dare to get any closer. They retreated instantly, something their master had never experienced before.

Even as shock covered his face, laughing-crying demon faces appeared in Meng Hao's eyes. One was clear, the other was blurry, and they instantly caused Meng Hao to emit a bizarre aura. The five wasps emitted sharp cries, and their bodies trembled even harder, as if they might lose their ability to fly. Suddenly, they turned and savagely attacked each other.

As this bizarre scene played out, Meng Hao strode through the midst of the wasps, raising his left hand and slicing his own finger, covering it with blood. Suddenly, the entire area was covered with a bloody aura. When it disappeared, Meng Hao was standing directly in front of the middle-aged man. He lifted up his index finger and pushed between the man's eyebrows.

The man's body shook, and his eyes bulged. His body rapidly began to wither, and by the time Meng Hao removed his finger, his entire body had transformed into blood, which drained down onto the ground.



Meng Hao turned and looked at the shocked late Foundation Establishment old man. Only the space of a few breaths had passed since Meng Hao took action, and yet he had already completely exterminated two powerful mid Foundation Establishment Cultivators.

His methods were vicious, his techniques bizarre. A Frigid Qi suddenly appeared in the old man's body, growing rapidly.

Now he understood why Xie Jie of the Black Sieve Sect had been watching Meng Hao that day on the Feng Shui compass, and had even tried to bait him into doing something that would reveal his abilities. Clearly, Xie Jie had heard something about Meng Hao.

"Want to keep going?" Meng Hao asked calmly. His index finger still glowed with a bloody light, casting a bloody light over his body.

The old man didn't respond. Considering the level of his Cultivation base, he too could have easily killed the two mid Foundation Establishment stage Cultivators. But he couldn't have done it in such a leisurely fashion. He felt fear in his heart, especially when he saw Meng Hao's complete lack thereof. Clasp hands in salute, he moved backward several paces, giving way for Meng Hao to pass.

"I am Xu Youdao 1. As for the matter today, I offer my apologies. I believe we will be meeting again soon." He said the last in a very meaningful tone.

Meng Hao thought for a moment, then nodded. The blood glow was beginning to fade as he shot off into the distance. In his arms, Xu Qing was completely shocked by the battle power of his Cultivation base.

She hesitated for a moment and then blurted, "What... what level is your Cultivation base, really?"

"I'm at the peak of early Foundation Establishment," he said with a little smile. He now appeared to be a completely different person than the one who had just been fighting. He really had changed because of all his experiences through the years. However, this change was in the way he dealt with enemies. His disposition toward his friends was as scholarly as ever, and hadn't changed in the least bit.

Actually, his ruthless killing had a lot to do with the poison within him. Someone infected with the three-colored Resurrection Lily would become increasingly cruel and ferocious until the day they transformed into an actual Resurrection Lily.

“How can you kill people of the mid Foundation Establishment stage...?” asked Xu Qing, her brow furrowed.

“Oh, there are many reasons,” he said simply. “I may be at the early Foundation Establishment stage, but I can hold my own against the late Foundation Establishment stage.”

Not much time passed before they reached a mountain. From the mountain peak, Meng Hao could see the large man-made area and the big black tower that was being erected.

He could just make out the nearly one thousand Black Sieve Sect disciples sitting cross-legged around the tall tower, along with the faint sound of scriptures being chanted. He couldn't make out the details of the scriptures, however.

“I can't get any closer,” he said. His gaze shifted from the scene below, to Xu Qing. “There shouldn't be any rogue Foundation Establishment Cultivators in this area, you should be able to proceed on your own without being in danger. Take this, it's an invisibility item. You'll be able to use it after you reach Foundation Establishment.” He handed her the invisibility talisman.

She accepted it. She still had Meng Hao's robes draped over her. They were a bit large, but she still was beautiful. She looked at Meng Hao and was about to open her mouth as if to say something. Instead, she leaned forward and embraced him lightly. Her head pressed against his chest, and she could hear his heart beating.

This was not an embrace of passion, but the embrace of a sister to a brother, of family.

The sky was growing light, and the darkness was fading away. Meng Hao looked down at Xu Qing's beautiful hair. It seemed as if her hair knew he was looking at it; or perhaps it was the wind. It floated up gently to caress

his face.

A long time passed, and then Xu Qing stepped back and looked him deep in the eyes.

“You need to be careful,” she said. “Get out of this place as soon as you can.” Then she turned, stepped onto a flying sword and shot down the mountain. She glided up and down a few times, eventually entering a small forest at the bottom of the mountain. When she emerged from the other side of the forest, Meng Hao’s clothes were gone and she was dressed in a fresh Black Sieve Sect robe.

Meng Hao stood there the whole time, watching her disappear into the distance. A sense of departure filled him, and for a moment, he felt like he was back in the Reliance Sect when it was being disbanded.

Now, though, he was no longer a Qi Condensation Cultivator. He was of Foundation Establishment, with a Perfect Foundation. He was no longer a child, but a young man. Wisdom birthed from maturity helped him to understand that it didn’t matter whether you are a man or woman; every person has the right to make their own choices.

His path could only be tread by he himself. Perhaps his path would cross the paths of others, and that was well and good. But for the moment, he needed to walk alone. Unless... he could be powerful enough to forge his own road. Change everything. The alternative was to live a life full of sighing.

He watched Xu Qing until she reached the Black Sieve Sect rendezvous point. Determination filled his eyes. He lifted his head, looking into the sky. There, the rising sun and the moon were almost on top of each other.

Meng Hao’s eyes began to glow.

“Since I’m here, I might as well go check things out. If the Classic of Time is real, then using the copper mirror and Spring and Autumn trees, I can forge that so-called treasure of Time! And then there’s my Thunderclap leaf. Lu Tao is in this place too, I might be able to get some more information.” He turned and shot up into the air, using the position of the sun and moon to guide his path.

He proceeded on for a while. Suddenly, a booming sound filled the air, and the suction force appeared again. This time, Meng Hao saw with his own eyes an early Foundation Establishment Cultivator who couldn't fight against it. His body exploded, and an intangible Dao Pillar flew out from the remains.

“The suction force is getting stronger. I'm worried that eventually, I won't be able to resist it.” He frowned, suppressing the trembling of his Dao Pillars and flying forward as quickly as possible. Soon, the sun and the moon would not be overlapping any more. But now that Meng Hao knew which direction to go, he realized that he was getting closer and closer to his destination.

Xu Youdao's name in Chinese is 徐有道 Xúyǒudào – Xu is a common family name. You means “have.” Dao is the same Dao as “The Dao,” which also means “way” or “path” ↵

# Chapter 155: The Last Person

Time passed slowly, about four hours. The suction power appeared again once, during which time Meng Hao continued to fly past mountain after mountain.

This place was very strange. The sun blazed brightly up above in the sky. If you looked closely, however, you could also see the vague shape of a moon within it. It seemed that within another two hours, they would split apart.

After about another hour's travel, a vast plain appeared up ahead.

The plain was filled with tall grass, half the height of a person. It swayed in the wind, making the plain look almost like a sea. The only sound present was the whispering of the wind. Within the plain was one area devoid of grass. Three people sat there cross-legged.

Two were women and one was a man. The man was middle-aged and dressed in a gray robe. His face was expressionless, and his eyes were closed in meditation. An icy air drifted off of his body. He was of the late Foundation Establishment stage. He was one of the three late Foundation Establishment Cultivators that traveled to this place on the violet Feng Shui compass.

Of the two women, one was middle-aged and a bit overweight. Her features were ordinary, almost like those of a farm-girl. She was another from that group of three powerful late Foundation Establishment Cultivators.

An impatient expression filled her face as she looked at the last woman. This woman wore a veil which covered half of her face and obscured her features in a mysterious blur.

"Fellow Daoist, do you invite me here so that I can sit around waiting? I somehow don't believe that our destination is really as dangerous as a dragon's lair or a tiger's den. Are Fellow Daoist Sima and myself really not enough?" She laughed coldly. The cold, middle-aged man opened his eyes from meditation. They glowed as he looked at the woman in the veil.

“Fellow Daoist Li, please wait just a bit longer,” said the veiled woman, her voice light. “I have invited five people in total. If they do not arrive, then we might as well not proceed. With just the three of us, our chances of success will be small.”

The Li woman snorted and seemed to be about to say more. In the end she didn't.

“Be patient for just a bit longer,” said the veiled woman. “The sun and moon will cease to overlap in about two hours. If they haven't arrived by then, then we might have no other choice than to make an attempt ourselves.”

An hour passed, at which point a beam of colorful light appeared. Within it was a streak of violet. Whoever was approaching wore a violet robe.

This person approached at top speed, arriving in the space of a few breaths. It was a young man with handsome features and a slight smile on his face. From his violet gown, it was obvious that he was no ordinary person. After landing, his eyes swept over the three others. He smiled at them and then cupped hands in greeting.

“I'm late,” said Xie Jie 1. “Please forgive me, Fellow Daoists. Sorry to keep you waiting, Junior Sister Han.” This was none other than Conclave disciple Xie Jie of the Black Sieve Sect. He looked at the veiled woman with a smirk as he revealed her identity.

His appearance caused the Li woman to frown slightly. She stood and returned his salute. The cold man, however, did little more than give him a slight nod.

The veiled woman frowned as the two others looked at her.

She laughed lightly, removing her veil. Her face was incredibly beautiful and delicate, her skin as lustrous as jade. Everything seemed to grow brighter because of her beauty.

“Han Bei 2 extends greetings to all you Fellow Daoists,” she said. “Originally I didn't want to reveal my identity for personal reasons.

However, it seems Elder Brother Xie took issue with that, so I will be more open with my identity for the sake of everyone's comfort." This woman was none other than Han Bei. Her enchanting features coupled with the beautiful smile on her face right now made it impossible to be irritated with her.

Xie Jie smiled. "I wasn't aware that Junior Sister Han had matters she wished to keep to herself. I spoke hastily, please don't take offense."

"It doesn't matter," she replied with a smile. "Considering the Sect activity in this place, Junior Sister was worried that revealing her identity would cause a misunderstanding. But with Elder Brother Xie here, I have nothing to worry about. Our chances of success are now much greater." The Li woman looked on pensively, and the gray-robed Cultivator frowned.

Her words were like a cotton ball with a needle inside. Xie Jie was just about to say something, but then stopped and turned his head. Everyone did the same, except for the gray-robed man.

A colorful beam of light approached, accompanied by a roaring wind that sent the grass whipping about. It transformed into an old man; this was none other than Xu Youdao.

He strode up to the group, his eyes flashing. He looked around for a moment, and then focused his gaze onto Han Bei.

"So, it turns out the invitation was from Fellow Daoist Han. I think you owe an explanation regarding what the Black Sieve Sect is doing in this place."

Han Bei smiled. "With you and your special technique, Fellow Daoist Xu, our mission will be much easier to accomplish. As for an explanation, you can rest at ease, sir. I will provide a full explanation soon."

Seeing Xu Youdao, the Li woman quickly greeted him with clasped hands. Xie Jie smiled and did the same. The gray-robed man simply nodded to him. So far, he had paid almost no heed to anyone.

"Is everyone here?" asked Xie Jie with a smile.

“I heard there’s one more,” said the Li woman, smiling ingratiatingly at Xie Jie.

“Oh?” said Xie Jie, his eyes narrowing. These three were late Foundation Establishment stage Cultivators, and as far as he could remember there hadn’t been any others amongst the rogue Cultivators. “Could it be that Han Bei invited some other Black Sieve Sect disciple?” he thought. “Who might it be...?” He eyed Han Bei. “Who is this last person we’re waiting for?” he asked with a smile. “Would Junior Sister Han mind explaining?”

“That’s right,” chimed in the Li woman. “I’m very interested as to who this final Fellow Daoist could possibly be. If he’s important, I’ll be sure to make friends. If he’s not important, then I must ask, why are we sitting around waiting?”

The gray-robed Cultivator closed his eyes, ignoring them. Xu Youdao stood there thoughtfully, his eyes flickering.

Han Bei was silent for a moment and then said, “I don’t know who it is either, much the same as how I didn’t know any of your identities at first. My guess is that while he isn’t an important figure now, if we don’t have him in our group, we may very well wind up empty-handed in our endeavor today. With this person, our chances of success will be increased by thirty percent.” Her words were spoken calmly, but with iron-like resoluteness.

“Oh?” said Xie Jie. His interest was now piqued. “And why does Junior Sister Han attach such importance to this person?”

The Li woman laughed coldly, her face filled with disdain, clearly feeling that Han Bei was exaggerating. She didn’t believe that a Foundation Establishment Cultivator could possibly be so useful. A Core Formation stage Cultivator would have been a different matter, but it was fundamentally impossible for such a person to join them.

“Could this person be a False Core Cultivator?” asked the Li woman with a sneer. “Fellow Daoist Han, you should really be careful. There are many people in the world who fish for fame and compliments.” It wasn’t that she specifically didn’t like Han Bei; actually, she hated all beautiful



women.”

“I’m truly not sure if this person is at the False Core stage or not,” Han Bei replied calmly, giving the Li woman a level look. “In any case, his is definitely extraordinary. Of that, you can be certain.”

The Li woman said nothing more. Suddenly, Xie Jie lifted his head and looked toward the horizon, as did Xu Youdao. Soon everyone’s eyes were fixed on the beam of light which shot toward them.

This was Meng Hao, of course. He whistled through the air, his eyes sweeping the land. Soon, he spotted the blank area on the plain, upon which the overlapping sun and moon shined, as well as the five people there.

He looked them over as he landed onto the ground. His expression was the same as usual as he walked over.

When he saw Meng Hao, Xu Youdao expression flickered. A bright glow appeared in Han Bei’s eyes, and her lips spread into a smile. As for Xie Jie, a cold look covered his face as he looked Meng Hao over.

“Greetings, Fellow Daoists,” he said coolly. “I was delayed on the way, and am a bit late.” He glanced over the group, his gaze lingering for a moment on Han Bei.

“Early Foundation Establishment stage?” said the Li woman, frowning. A haughty look of disdain appeared on her face. She couldn’t wait to rudely say, “This is the person Fellow Daoist Han claims is essential? She thinks a trifling early Foundation Establishment is so important? Laughable. Or could it be that this junior generation infant just happened to accidentally stumble upon this area?”

Meng Hao looked at her without a word.

“I’m also very curious about this,” said Xie Jie with a smile. An almost imperceptible flicker appeared in his eyes.

Hearing Xie Jie’s words caused the Li Woman’s arrogance to grow even greater. “For an early Foundation Establishment Cultivator to be in our midst is demeaning. Han Bei may have recommended him, but I, Li, shall

test him out myself and see what skills he has.” She began to walk toward Meng Hao. “Produce every scrap of power from your Cultivation base,” she said. “If you can live through one strike from me, then I’ll agree that you’re qualified to join us. If you’re not qualified, then you’ll be killed by the Black Sieve Sect any way. It seems death will end all your troubles!”

By the time she finished speaking, she had reached Meng Hao. She lifted her right hand and a blinding orange light appeared, which transformed into a pink colored whip. It flipped about, emitting cracking sounds.

Xie Jie appeared in Chapter 145: An Ancient Mountain Path, as well as Chapter 146 ↩

Han Bei appeared previously in:

Chapter 141: The Cosmetic Cultivation Pill Appears Again

Chapter 143: Ghost in the Night

Chapter 146: This is Ultimate Vexation!

↩

# Chapter 156: Fear of Meng Hao

Meng Hao's expression was tranquil. No one moved to interfere with the woman. The man in the gray robes sat meditating with his eyes closed. Xu Youdao was aware of Meng Hao's extraordinariness, so naturally he did nothing.

As for Han Bei, she had speculations regarding Meng Hao's incredible power, but wasn't certain. She just knew a bit of secret information, which had fueled her conjectures. For her, this situation would be a good chance to observe Meng Hao's battle prowess.

She still wished to offer some words of caution, but would the Li woman really listen? The woman's Cultivation base was at the late Foundation Establishment stage, but in terms of thinking ability, she was one of the weakest present. The only way she had reached late Foundation Establishment was luck accumulated by her ancestors that had been passed down to her.

Regarding Xie Jie, he had intentionally manipulated the whole thing, so obviously did nothing to stop it from happening. He watched Meng Hao from off to the side, a smile on his lips. He was very curious as to why the Elders of the Sect had instructed him to keep an eye on Meng Hao. After arriving at the Blessed Land, he hadn't paid too close attention, but having run into Meng Hao again, he wanted to feel him out.

Everyone had their own plans and schemes. Meng Hao glanced them over, and although he wasn't able to fully grasp their various motivations, he had a pretty good idea. He watched the Li woman approaching, her pink whip whistling through the air. His face was expressionless, and he didn't take even a single step backward. In fact, in the midst of her approach, he took three steps forward.

As he did, he lifted his right hand and struck out.

As his palm struck out a fierce wind sprang up, causing the surrounding grass to whip about in a frenzy. Without pausing, Meng Hao struck out a second time, then a third, a fourth and a fifth time!

These five strikes were the Nineteen Clear Sky strikes that Meng Hao had acquired from the violet-robed young man, by means of the rattan vines. The manual was incomplete, but the first five strikes were whole.

Each of these five strikes were filled with the complete power of Meng Hao's Perfect Dao pillars. After striking out five times, an enormous magical palm the size of a person appeared in front of him. Wind whipped about in all directions as the palm shot forward.

When the five Clear Sky strikes appeared, Han Bei and Xie Jie's expressions changed. They instantly recognized the enormous palm. This was a magical technique from the Black Sieve Sect; there was no way for outsiders to know it. Yet, here was Meng Hao, using it right in front of their eyes. There was no denying it, and this caused their hearts to tremble.

The Li woman was of the late Foundation Establishment stage, but she only had seven Dao Pillars. Furthermore, they were not even Cracked, but Fractured. Disdain covered her face as her illusory whip slammed into Meng Hao's enormous palm. She knew in her heart what was going to happen. The palm would collapse into pieces as her whip sliced through it like a hot knife through butter. After it disintegrated, her whip would fall upon her opponent's body, severing tendons and crushing bones.

Boom!

An explosion reverberated out. There was a collapse. But it wasn't Meng Hao's palm. As soon as the middle-aged woman's magical whip made contact with the giant palm, it shook, and then broke apart into pieces. The Li woman's face fell when she saw this unexpected turn of events. A look of disbelief covered her face.

How could she possibly have imagined that this would happen? She had used a magical whip powered by late Foundation Establishment. Her opponent's palm exceeded her wildest imagination; dread seeped into her eyes.

Meng Hao's giant palm instantly destroyed the whip. It shot forward with shocking power, accompanied by gale force winds. The Li woman no

longer scorned Meng Hao; instead, as the area began to shake, a sense of imminent danger rose up inside her. She retreated immediately, raising her right hand, into which a small shield appeared. She bit down on her tongue and then spit up some blood from her Cultivation base. When it landed on the little shield, it began to spin, expanding outward and meeting Meng Hao's giant palm.

Another explosion rippled out. The shield shook, and was tossed backward several meters, just barely able to resist the palm. Meng Hao continued to stride forward. His Spiritual Sense, which far outmatched any late Foundation Establishment Cultivator, exploded out, crushing down onto the Li woman.

She screamed under the pressure. It felt like a sharp sword was stabbing through her brain, as if her own Spiritual Sense were about to shatter. She coughed up blood and staggered backward. By this time, Meng Hao had reached the small shield. He waved his hand, causing the massive illusory palm to wrap around the shield and drag it back to him. Using his Spiritual Sense, he erased the branding mark on the shield and then put it into his bag of holding. He looked at the woman surnamed Li.

The woman was in shock, her Spiritual Sense suppressed, her treasure un-branded and taken by Meng Hao. She retreated backward at top speed, coughing up blood, her face pale, her head buzzing. After she had moved backward a dozen or so meters, she finally came to a stop. She looked up at Meng Hao, astonished.

"You...." Her scalp was numb. It was clear that Meng Hao's Cultivation base must not be at the early Foundation Establishment stage. She had never seen an early Foundation Establishment Cultivator display such incredible battle power. Nor had she ever experienced such terrifying Spiritual Sense.

Not even a Flawless Foundation could be like this, as far as she was concerned.

"This art contains a total of nineteen strikes," Meng Hao said coolly, his expression the same as always. He didn't even mention anything about the

treasure he'd snatched from her.

Hearing his words, the Li woman sucked in a breath, and her face went a few shades more pale. Her body began to tremble. The attack just now had rattled her Dao Pillars, caused her to cough up blood, and had forced her to utilize a treasured item. If more than five strikes had been used, she wasn't sure if her treasure could have resisted it. In that case, her Dao Pillars would surely have been damaged.

"Fellow Daoist, your Cultivation base is unfathomable," she said in a strained voice. "I was crude and rash, please don't take offense. Please keep my Cloud Peak shield as a token of my apology." She clasped hands and bowed deeply to Meng Hao, her eyes filled with dread.

It wasn't just her. Xu Youdao's gaze was fixed on Meng Hao. He was now completely reassured that he had made the right decision not to attack Meng Hao earlier. Meng Hao could not be an early Foundation Establishment Cultivator. If he really was... then that was exponentially more frightening.

The gray-robed man's eyes flickered open and came to rest on Meng Hao. He nodded.

Han Bei looked at Meng Hao thoughtfully, a light smile appearing on her face.

"Fellow Daoist Meng, you're not late. The hour has arrived. Our chances of acquiring the Classic of Time has now increased thirty percent."

Xie Jie laughed and said nothing. He didn't bring up the Nineteen Clear Sky strikes. Fear of Meng Hao now existed in his heart, and he now knew that Meng Hao was not a person to be provoked lightly. After all, he had only seen Meng Hao's colossal Spiritual Sense, and had no inkling what magical techniques or items he might have.

Whenever he dealt with people he didn't understand, he would be careful not to provoke them. Only after coming to understand them completely would he strike like lightning.

"Forget about the Classic of Time for a moment," said Meng Hao calmly.

He looked at Han Bei, his expression the same as ever. “I came to this Blessed Land at the request of Fellow Daoist Han. However, your Sect controls this place. I’m very curious. If I help you to acquire the Classic of Time, will my Dao Pillars be ripped out afterward?”

Han Bei and Xie Jie’s eyes flashed. Before they could respond, Xu Youdao laughed grimly and said, “Fellow Daoist Meng doesn’t beat around the bush. I’m also very curious about this matter. Would the two Fellow Daoists care to provide an explanation to dispel our doubts?”

“I, too, would like to know the answer to this question,” said the gray-robed man. His eyes flashed with a cold light as he looked at Han Bei and Xie Jie.

It seemed the Li woman was also concerned with her safety. She said nothing, but moved back a few paces, effectively closing a circle around Han Bei and Xie Jie.

Han Bei smiled. “Fellow Daoists, I must request that you do not press us regarding Sect matters. I really can’t speak about it. Even if I did, you most likely wouldn’t believe me. In any case, it’s a Sect secret. Even though I’m a Conclave disciple, I don’t know a lot about it. However, as for the place we’re going to, I will of course take responsibility for your safety.” She waved her hand and four jade slips flew out toward Meng Hao and the others.

Han Bei continued, “Within this jade slip is a detailed explanation of how to exit this place. Use the method described therein, and you can leave without a hitch. There are several exits to this ancient Blessed Land. If you don’t believe me, read the jade slip and then check to see where the exits are. Then you’ll understand why I selected this location as our rendezvous point.” She smiled, looking as earnest as always.

Meng Hao’s Spiritual Sense swept over the jade slip, and he looked around the area he stood. According to the jade slip, there were three exits. One of them... was the area they were standing on top of.

Meng Hao’s hands flashed the incantation method recorded within the jade slip and he immediately felt a teleportation power rising up from

beneath his feet. However, now was not the time to test it out, so he did not continue to bind the incantation.

“Here are four Spirit Seal insects,” said Han Bei. “If you wish to conduct further inspection, you can. Send some Spiritual Sense into them and then send them out of the exit. Then you can be assured that my words are not false.” She waved her right hand. Four white, thumb-sized insects flew out toward Meng Hao and the others.

Xu Youdao grabbed one. After examining it for a moment, he nodded. Branding it with Spiritual Sense, he used the technique described in the jade slip to send the insect down into the earth. It disappeared.

The Li woman did the same. The gray-robed Cultivator completely ignored Han Bei’s insects, instead slapping his bag of holding to produce a scorpion.

“Of course I believe you, Fellow Daoist Han,” said Meng Hao. He glanced at the insects and then selected one. He continued with his incantation, sending the insect through the exit using the method from the jade slip. However, in addition to the bug, he sent one of the rattan vines that were hidden deep in the earth. From the insect, he caught the indistinct impression of another location. It was definitely somewhere else, somewhere far, far away.

However, at the same time, he suddenly caught a sense of intense danger from the vine. Meng Hao’s eyes narrowed.

Almost immediately the vine died. As it did, it transmitted a final image to Meng Hao. It appeared clearly in his mind, an enormous bronze cauldron. It was incredibly imposing, appearing to be tens of thousands of meters tall.

A Cauldron:





# Chapter 157: A Cauldron with a Square Exterior!

The image disappeared. Meng Hao's expression was as normal, revealing nothing. He looked at Xu Youdao and the others. Their expressions had not changed. It seemed all of them, including Xu Youdao and the gray-robed Cultivator, approved of what Han Bei had said.

"Could it be that they didn't notice the bronze cauldron?" thought Meng Hao. After being branded by his blood, the vines had begun to emit a faint Demonic Qi.

Han Bei smiled. "Fellow Daoists, now that you can rest your hearts at ease, please accompany me to the location of the Classic of Time. No matter what happens today, if we acquire the Classic, then everyone will get a copy." She bowed toward the group, and then shot into the air and flew out across the plain.

Xie Jie was the second to fly up, followed by Xu Youdao and the Li woman. Meng Hao and the gray-robed Cultivator were the last of the six to turn into beams of colourful light that shot through the sky.

No one spoke as they traveled. Everyone was lost in their own thoughts. Meng Hao's face was expressionless, but his thoughts were filled with the image of the huge bronze cauldron. At the moment, he was about seventy to eighty percent certain that the area he had seen was no exit, but rather Han Bei's handiwork.

He wasn't sure if Han Bei could dupe the others, but he had his good luck charm, and thus felt reassured in his current position. The location of the Classic of Time was surely bizarre and astonishing; if it weren't, Han Bei wouldn't have spent so much time and resources to go there.

"I wonder how Han Bei learned of this Classic of Time..." he thought to himself, looking up ahead at Han Bei's lithe figure as she shot through the air.

Suddenly, Xu Youdao spoke up, giving voice to what Meng Hao had just

been considering. “Fellow Daoist Han, you still haven’t explained how you learned of the Classic of time, nor how you acquired the first volume.”

Han Bei looked back with a smile.

“If Fellow Daoist Xu is anxious for an answer, then I will give it as soon as we arrive.” It was at this time that they reached the edge of the vast plain. Suddenly, the roaring sound once again appeared. It was very far away, but it still caused everyone except for Han Bei and Xie Jie to feel shaken.

Those of the late Foundation Establishment stage circulated their Cultivation bases until the roaring and suction force died down. Then everything went back to normal, except that their faces were a bit paler.

An apologetic look appeared on Han Bei’s face, but she said nothing. She raised her hand and pushed her hand down toward the ground. A strong wind suddenly sprang into being, sweeping across the land. Han Bei took a deep breath and then smacked her bag of holding. A jade bottle appeared in her hand.

It was blue-green in color, and as soon as it appeared, her expression became somewhat somber. She tossed it out, and everyone watched as it descended downward.

When it landed onto the ground, cracks appeared on its surface that spread out rapidly. A blue liquid appeared within the cracks which emanated a faintly bitter Qi. As the Qi spread out, the eyes of the gray-robed Cultivator narrowed.

“That’s... Blue Heaven Elixir!”

Even as his words rang out, the blue bottle split into pieces. The blue liquid within expanded out to form a mist that enveloped the surrounding three hundred meter area. Suddenly, all of the grass disappeared, as if it had been a mere illusion. The earth surrounding them was pitch black, as if it were suffering from some sort of curse, some ancient spell which had existed for millennia.

“Fellow Daoist Sima, you are certainly experienced and knowledgeable.

You are correct, this is Blue Heaven Elixir. To acquire even one drop required countless hardships. It's capable of piercing a variety of illusions." She smiled at the gray-robed man, then glanced at Meng Hao and the others.

"Fellow Daoists, I know that you have many questions. We are currently standing above an ancient portal which leads to a sealed zone within the Blessed Land. In actuality, the Black Sieve Sect learned about this Blessed Land hundreds of years ago. However, the person who actually discovered it was not a disciple of the Black Sieve Sect, but an ancestor of my Clan.

"Because of the Blessed Land, the Black Sieve Sect made my ancestor join the Sect, which is how the Han bloodline came to exist there. In fact, the map used to enter this place was created after years of research on the part of one of my Clan uncles. He used a mysterious magical technique to refine and congeal his own blood into the map. Because...." She was silent for the space of a few breaths, then continued, "Because this Blessed Land was once ruled by a lord who was also a patriarch of the Han Clan. However, he eventually became one with the Dao, and dissipated. Despite that, a connection to this place will occasionally appear within his descendants.

"I'm not sure what the Black Sieve Sect is plotting. But before he transformed into the map, my Clan uncle told me that because of his bloodline connection to this place, he knew that a secret technique of the Han Clan existed within. The three volume Time magic. This magic can produce a Time-Ruining treasure. Wielding the treasure can enable you to suck away the lifespans of others. That is why it requires a Spring and Autumn tree or similar item as its base.

"Even in ancient times," she said, her voice gentle and clear, "this Time-Ruining treasure was astonishing and rarely seen. Nowadays, it could be considered lost. If it still exists, then it's only in this place! Regarding the first volume of the Classic of Time, well... that is an item that has been passed down through generations in my Clan.

"I shall combine the three volumes and refine the Time-Ruining treasure. It is my personal affair, and I don't want other Han Clan

members to know about it. I also wish to avoid the prying eyes of the Black Sieve Sect. That is why I invited you all here today. As for Elder Brother Xie, he is here because of a previous agreement between the two of us.”

Everyone obviously had their own opinion about how much of what she had just said was true and how much was false. The methods she had used on the outside to gather their group together gave some clues. Meng Hao’s eyes flashed over the group, and inside, he laughed.

“It seems like everybody is thinking something different. But other than me, it looks like nobody is even listening to Han Bei’s explanation. And she knows it. There does seem to be something wrong with what she said just now.

“However... the Classic of Time is most likely real. Right now, I don’t really have very many powerful magical items other than the wooden swords. I do have the Spring and Autumn tree which is easy to duplicate with the copper mirror. If I can learn the technique from the Classic of Time, then my problem will be solved.

“I still need to be cautious, though. If anything goes wrong, I’ll use the good luck charm to leave this place immediately.” Even as he made his mind up, Han Bei flashed an incantation gesture to open the ancient portal beneath them.

An ancient and archaic roar sounded out from within, as if some sleeping beast was awakening. Suddenly, a glittering light appeared. It did not spread out far; it only enveloped the surrounding three hundred meters.

When the light appeared, Han Bei looked up to the sky as if she were calculating something. Then, her body flashed and she shot down into the portal. With a slight smile, Xie Jie entered as well, followed by Xu Youdao and the others.

Meng Hao swept the area with Spiritual Sense to confirm that it was nothing more than a teleportation portal. After seeing everyone else enter and begin to turn blurry, he followed. The glowing light flickered and then

faded. Everyone disappeared.

When they re-appeared, the sky above was the same sky as in the Blessed Land. However, the earth was covered with cracks. Far off in the distance, an object was visible. When Meng Hao's eyes fell upon it, they shone brightly for a moment and then returned to normal.

Up ahead was an enormous bronze cauldron!

The cauldron was several tens of thousands of meters tall, rising up so tall that it seemed to be supporting the sky. It looked both ancient and primitive, as if it had existed for countless years. A boundless might radiated out from the cauldron, causing everyone to feel an intense fear, even Han Bei.

A variety of thoughts ran through the minds of everyone present.

“Cauldrons are the utensils of nations. They can only be forged by people with incredible destiny. It turns out... such a fear-inspiring cauldron exists in this place!”

“What a true treasure! Who could possibly be so bold as to forge such a heavenly cauldron?!”

“It's archaic design seems to be matchless. It must have been here for countless tens of thousands of years. Could it have been forged by some ancient almighty being...?”

They all panted as they gazed upon the cauldron. Even the cold man in the gray robe gasped when he saw it. A strange light flickered in his eyes.

Xie Jie's eyes narrowed, and it took some time before he regained his composure.

Meng Hao instantly recognized it; this was the same cauldron he had seen in the transmission from the vine before it had died in the so-called exit. As he looked around, he could tell that... everything around looked exactly the same as what he had seen in the supposed exit.

He laughed coldly in his heart, but his expression didn't change at all. He furtively retrieved the good luck charm and checked to make sure that it

was still working. Inwardly, he was incapable of holding back some admiration for Patriarch Reliance. He wasn't sure how treasured of an item this good luck charm was, but he did know that it still worked in this place.

Feeling a bit reassured, he looked back up at the massive cauldron. He couldn't help but feel awed. Even though this wasn't the first time he'd seen it, to stand in front of it like this made him feel like an insect.

"The cauldron is cracked..." said Xu Youdao with a sigh.

Everyone could see that the massive, awe-inspiring bronze cauldron had a huge crack running down through it. The crack seemed as if it wished to split the cauldron in two, yet wasn't quite able to.

Everyone else guessed in their hearts that the crack must have been caused by some other shocking magical item. But when Meng Hao saw it, he got a different feeling. The crack was not something that was caused by a magical item. He looked up into the sky and thought back to how it had felt to be struck by Tribulation Lightning. That was the same type of feeling he got when he looked at the crack; it must have been caused by Tribulation Lightning!

"Anyone who could take possession of this massive cauldron and use it as a magical item would definitely be able to shake the Cultivation World." Xie Jie's words were soft, but filled with passion.

# Chapter 158: Coexist with Ji?!

Han Bei took a deep breath, and a look of excitement flashed across her face. She lifted her right hand, and an ancient, crescent-shaped piece of jade flew out. It was a deep green color, almost black, and had a completely extraordinary appearance. It was not an object that a person would normally hold in their hand, but rather something that seemed as if it should be buried deep in an ancient tomb, never to see the light of day. Its color seemed to be the result of absorbing far too much sinister Death Qi.

The crescent jade flew out and then shockingly emitted a bright glow which covered everything around. The glow rippled as it shot forward toward the crack on the surface of the massive cauldron, and then entered it.

“This is where the final two volumes of the Classic of Time are!” said Han Bei. She flew forward, followed by Xie Jie, the Li woman, Xu Youdao and the man in the gray robe.

Meng Hao proceeded along as well. Six beams of flashing light shot ahead, growing closer and closer to the enormous cauldron. As they grew near, they felt an enormous pressure spreading out from the cauldron, which continued to grow stronger and stronger.

Soon, they were nearing the gigantic crack, which looked like an enormous canyon on the surface of the cauldron. They came to a stop in front of the crack. A mist floated around within, thin, but all-encompassing. Inside was nothing but blackness.

Upon nearing the crack, Xie Jie slapped his bag of holding. A green light appeared that solidified into a furry green beast. Its body flashed as it shot directly toward the crack. The instant it touched the mist, however, it let out a miserable cry, and its body was torn to pieces.

Caution filled the hearts of the onlookers.

“Only someone with incredible Spiritual Sense can lift the mist and mend this crack,” said Han Bei. “Then we can enter.” She looked up at the

sky again as if she were calculating something. Then she turned and looked at Meng Hao.

It wasn't just her. Xu Youdao's gaze fell onto him as well. Meng Hao's battle with the Li woman, and the intense power of his Spiritual Sense, had left a deep impression on the man.

"Fellow Daoist Han, you must be joking," said Meng Hao, somewhat impolitely. "This cauldron must have been cast innumerable years ago. It's Qi is beyond ordinary. I don't think I can even touch that crack."

"Fellow Daoist Meng, you misunderstand," she said hastily. "Of course I'm aware that this cauldron is not something people with Cultivation bases like ours can touch. I have a family heirloom treasure that can eradicate the crack. However, it must be guided by Spiritual Sense. Doing will cause the crack to be healed." As she spoke, she slapped her bag of holding to produce a small fan the size of a palm. It only had three feathers, each of which was covered with magical symbols.

"Only one person can use the treasure, and your Spiritual Sense is the most powerful among our group. I truly hope to gain your assistance. Once we enter, there will be other areas where you will not be required to do anything. This item is a fan. When its spirit is pushed with Spiritual Sense, it will release a power that far supersedes our Cultivation bases. It is a treasure that the Han Clan specifically forged just for this location."

Meng Hao looked calmly at the fan for a moment, and then lifted his hand. The fan flew toward him. He examined it for a moment but didn't touch it at first.

Eventually, he gave a slight nod.

Seeing him agree, Han Bei let out a sigh of relief. She then moved off to the side, away from Meng Hao, in order to prevent any sort of misunderstanding.

His face was blank as he released his Spiritual Sense. As it emanated out, Han Bei and the others concentrated, sensing the immense power and comparing it to their own. All of them grew even more cautious.



Meng Hao sent his Spiritual Sense into the fan to examine it. Sure enough, it was branded, linking it to Han Bei. Meng Hao lifted his head up to look at the crack in the enormous cauldron.

A moment later he lifted his hand and thrust it forward. The fan suddenly erupted into flame. The three feathers began to wriggle in a bizarre fashion. A whirlwind sprung into being around Meng Hao.

As his hand moved forward, the whirlwind shot toward the mist. A boom echoed out as it slammed into it. The mist immediately began to roil and seethe. At first it seemed as if the two would cancel each other out. However, the whirlwind wasn't strong enough, and began to fade away.

"The crack can be erased, but it's somewhat draining." Meng Hao watched the mist within the crack restored itself, as if it were being reborn. He thought for a moment, and then lifted his right hand and released even more Spiritual Sense. This time, he used more than before, causing the flames on the fan to rise up even more awe-inspiringly. Now, the flames were filled with two colors!

The onlookers' pupils constricted as they felt the power of Meng Hao's Spiritual Sense, which seemed to be over double their own. This shocked them to the core, especially Han Bei, whose eyes filled with fear as she watched him.

It seemed as if the fan were sucking in Meng Hao's Spiritual Sense as fast as possible. He proceeded with caution; if any signs appeared to indicate that he was losing control, he would instantly sever its connection to his Spiritual Sense.

The whirlwind appeared again, even more powerful than last time. Within an instant, Meng Hao's figure was almost impossible to see within its screaming winds. The onlookers could just barely make out the image of him waving his hand forward.

As he did, the fan's first feather instantly transformed into burning ash and the second feather began to fall apart. The wind grew stronger, roaring with power. It slammed into the mist, and as it did, the third feather of the fan disappeared into flaming ashes.

The entire fan now fell apart, causing Han Bei's heart to melt a bit. Then her gaze hardened; success or failure would occur at this juncture.

Boom!

A massive explosion ripped out as the enormous whirlwind collided with the mist. They ate at each other, and suddenly a gap appeared within the mist.

At the same time, a sinister Frigid Qi erupted out from within the cauldron, shooting out through the mist and blasting across the group of Cultivators.

It was as if a door had just opened which had been closed for ages. Qi that had been sealed up for countless years burst out, flowing across Meng Hao and the others. If that was all, it would not be a big deal. However, within the Frigid Qi of Time existed memories that swept across the six people. Suddenly, images appeared in front of them from countless ages ago.

Within the vision could be seen an enormous, shocking bronze cauldron. It floated above the earth, underneath a red sky. Astonishing bolts of lightning descended onto its surface, slashing it constantly, as if they desired to crush it into nothing.

However, the cauldron would not give in, and it rose up amidst the roar of the lightning. Up above in the red sky, a vortex appeared, beyond which could barely be made out the image of another world. The cauldron wished to defy the Heavens and pass through the vortex into the vague world beyond.

Below on the ground were hundreds of thousands of figures. They prostrated themselves on the ground, chanting scriptures at the same time. The sounds of their voices merged together and echoed out. When the sound reached his ears, it made Meng Hao think of the the Black Sieve Sect disciples sitting cross-legged, chanting scriptures. It sounded... similar, even though he couldn't make out the details of what they were chanting.

Suddenly a voice boomed out from within the cauldron. "It is thy wish

for the vault of Heavens to replace the stars, to cover my eyes with the dome of the Heavens, to impeded the World Tree, to shatter the stars. My master may be sleeping, but can he still exist under the same sky as Ji?!” Lighting fell down constantly from the Heavens, seeking to obliterate the cauldron. Suddenly, the vision passed from the eyes of everyone except for Meng Hao. They exchanged shaken looks with each other.

Meng Hao was a bit closer to the cauldron, however, and was the first to meet the blast of Time wind. His vision continued on a bit longer.

He saw the massive bronze cauldron continuing to rise up. The lightning falling from the red sky began to merge together. It was impossible to tell how many lightning bolts congregated to form a gigantic spear. It looked like a tooth surrounded by fields of lightning that shot down toward the cauldron.

A boom echoed out and the giant bronze cauldron trembled. A massive crack split down through it. It rose no more, and instead fell down. It slammed into the ground, and then another voice sounded out. It seemed to sigh.

“You are unwilling to let me take this cauldron from this place. Then... I will lay in rest here forever, waiting for the day on which you fall.”

It was at this point that the vision faded from Meng Hao’s eyes. He took a deep breath and then lifted his head to look at the cauldron. As of now, the mist and the crack caused by it, were disappearing.

An anxious expression appeared on Han Bei’s face. Not hesitating in the slightest, she shot forward, flying toward the crack. Without a word, the rest of the group followed, their eyes flickering.

Meng Hao flew along with them as they headed at top speed toward the crack. As soon as he entered the cauldron, Meng Hao felt the copper mirror in his bag of the Cosmos growing hot.

Now was not the time to examine it, though. Meng Hao entered the cauldron to find himself in a world of lightning and thunder.

The inside of the cauldron was a space of several tens of thousands of

meters in size. It was completely filled with crashing lightning, almost like a river. The light created by so much lightning was as blinding as sunlight.

However, there was no time for the group to gaze at the world within the cauldron. From within their midst, a blood-curdling scream rose up.

The Li woman was the last to enter. The instant she did, a bolt of lightning descended with incredible speed. It slammed into her. She screamed as her body was transformed into flying ash. Even her bag of holding was incinerated into nothingness.

# Chapter 159: Square Without, Round Within; a Trend of the Heavens

It happened so quickly that Xu Youdao's face flickered. Next to him, the eyes of the gray-robed Cultivator narrowed and he slapped his bag of holding to produce a wooden slip.

It emitted a bluish light that seemed to indicate it could repel lightning. The bluish light circled around the gray-robed Cultivator and he took several steps away, as if he didn't want to stand close to any of the others.

Xie Jie's face also flickered. About the same time that the bluish light flickered up around the gray-robed Cultivator, a wooden statue appeared in Xie Jie's hand. The statue had three heads and six arms. As it appeared, it transformed into a soft, glowing light that circulated around Xie Jie.

Han Bei reacted even faster, sooner in fact, than even Xie Jie or the gray-robed man. A three-colored lotus throne appeared in front of her; obviously this was also some sort of lightning-repelling treasure.

Only Xu Youdao and Meng Hao seemed to be without such objects. Xu Youdao let out a cold harumph as he unwrapped a blue treasure shaped like a medicinal pill. The pill emitted a bluish-green shield which surrounded his body.

Seeing all of this, Meng Hao laughed grimly. The other three had obviously colluded; otherwise, why would they possibly have all come equipped with lightning-repelling treasures? Only he and the Li woman had come unprepared.

"Nice move, Fellow Daoist Han," said Meng Hao coolly, his eyes sweeping across the four of them.

"I never anticipated there would be so much lighting," said Han Bei lightly, "so I'm not sure what you're talking about. Fellow Daoist Meng, if you don't have a lightning-repelling item, then you're welcome to use this Anti-Lightning Leaf. It's only moderately effective, but it's better than nothing." A translucent leaf appeared in her hand, and she looked at Meng

Hao. Actually, she had been eyeing him this entire time, especially the moment when he'd entered the cauldron. When that happened, her eyes had flickered.

Xie Jie and the other two men were all looking at Meng Hao, although it was impossible to tell what they were thinking. Their eyes seemed to be filled with an unanswered question.

Lightning crackled about above them, and booms of thunder filled the air. It was powerful and astonishing. Each bolt of lightning seemed to be incredibly fierce, strong enough to strike down even the late Foundation Establishment stage.

Suddenly, a bolt of lightning slammed down in the midst of them. An explosion rattled out as the lightning dissipated into countless arcs of electricity.

"I have no lightning-repelling item, but I do have a lightning-attracting technique," said Meng Hao calmly. The lightning mist appeared around him, which then congealed into the lightning flag.

Electricity swirled around it, which included strands that contained the Heavenly Tribulation Meng Hao had collected. It was clearly an extraordinary item. The nearby lightning seemed to twist, as if it were being pulled down.

If all the lightning in the area were really called forth, then it wouldn't matter if the others had lightning-repelling magic. They would all be transformed into dust just as quickly as the Li woman.

Almost as soon as the lightning flag appeared and the lightning around them began to ripple, Meng Hao sucked the flag back into his mouth. The converging lightning dispersed. However, it was now obvious that if the flag remained in the area for any amount of time, then it would call the lightning down, and they would all die.

Xie Jie's expression flickered, the gray-robed man's eyes narrowed, and Xu Youdao gasped and took a few steps back. Fear of Meng Hao filled their eyes.

The sensation of danger filled their heads, and their hearts began to pound. Unsightly expressions instantly filled their faces.

Xie Jie's voice was also grim as he said, "Fellow Daoist, you're really being a bit too excessive." His heart was filled with vigilance as he spoke, his attention focused solely on Meng Hao.

Xu Youdao had already been affected by Meng Hao's ferocity twice. Now, he stared at him with a complicated look, saying nothing. Yet again, he sighed inwardly. In his eyes, Meng Hao was no weaker than some Core Formation eccentrics.

He didn't need a lightning-repelling item. With a lightning-attracting item, he had suddenly turned the tables and put everyone else at a disadvantage.

"Fellow Daoist, what is the meaning of this?" said the gray-robed man, staring at Meng Hao.

"Oh nothing," said Meng Hao. "I just want to remind you, Fellow Daoists, that Meng Hao can call down lightning at any time." He spoke calmly and slowly as he stood there. He seemed ready to pull out his lightning treasure if even one bolt of lightning headed his way.

Han Bei said nothing for the space of a few breaths before a genial smile appeared on her face.

"I was joking with you just now, Fellow Daoist Meng. Of course I have a way for you repel the lightning." She waved her hand, and a leaf fell off of the lotus throne. She was just about to hand it to him, when he laughed and approached her.

Her face fell; her heart was filled with fear of his methods, and when she saw him nearing her, she involuntarily took a step backward.

But he had already arrived at her side. "There's no need to go to the trouble, Fellow Daoist Han," he said coolly. Lightning crackled above them. "Let's just use your lotus throne together. Wouldn't that be easier? Or are you unwilling to do so?"

A twisted look appeared on her face, but before she could say anything,

the gray-robed Cultivator nodded.

“That would be the best,” he said.

“I agree,” said Xu Youdao, breathing a sigh of relief inwardly.

Xie Jie’s eyes sparkled, and he did nothing to indicate he disagreed.

Han Bei hesitated a moment, then gave Meng Hao a bitter smile.

“If that’s your requirement, Fellow Daoist Meng, then how could I disagree?” She gritted her teeth as she opened the lotus throne shield and allowed Meng Hao to enter.

Now that Meng Hao stood next to Han Bei within the shield, the other three men felt somewhat more at ease. Meng Hao’s threat moments ago had been beyond anything they could have anticipated. Even thinking back to it caused the hair on their necks to stand on end. Meng Hao was truly vicious.

Han Bei looked deeply at Meng Hao for a moment with a forced smile. Then she gave him a slight bow and began to move forward. Meng Hao went along, his face calm. Xie Jie and the others followed.

Five people gradually proceeded through the torrents of lightning. Roaring filled the air. Lightning fell, crashing into the ground and sending sparks rippling out in all directions.

Clearly, the lightning-repelling items were extraordinary; the party appeared to be completely safe. Meng Hao’s eyes swept over them, and inside he laughed coldly. These magical items were clearly not things that Foundation Establishment Cultivators should have in their possession. Each of these Cultivators must have the backing someone extremely powerful, who provided the impetus for them to enter this place.

“Xie Jie only has the Black Sieve Sect,” he thought. “As for the gray-robed man and Xu Youdao, they’re obviously not ordinary rogue Cultivators. They must have some powerful connections.” As the group proceeded on, the lightning grew more intense and frightening. The roaring never seemed to end. Meng Hao had seen Tribulation Lightning before, but the lightning here seemed even more formidable.



“This is not a place for Foundation Establishment Cultivators. Just one bolt could completely eradicate any of us. Yet, none of these people seem even slightly concerned. Obviously they knew ahead of time what they would be facing.

“I was targeted by Tribulation Lightning because of my Perfect Dao Pillar, which is not permitted to exist. As for this cauldron... the spirit of the Heavens must be furious, filled with intense desire to obliterate it, even more so than me.” Meng Hao looked up ahead. This amount of lightning was unpleasant to the eyes, and made it impossible to examine the surroundings. The only option was to continue forward.

No one spoke as they traveled onward. About an hour passed, and they were much further in. Even though they were still surrounded by lightning, the intensity had lessened, and now they were able to see a bit more clearly. What they saw ahead of them caused them all to begin to breathe heavily.

Xu Youdao gasped. “That’s...” His face was covered with shock.

Xie Jie eyes glittered, and he panted. Next to him, the gray-robed Cultivator’s eyes shone as he stared dead ahead.

Han Bei’s eyes also grew brighter.

Far up ahead, in the center of the giant cauldron, were nine enormous statues. Each statue depicted a middle-aged man. The clothing they wore was not like the clothing of modern times; it was much simpler. And yet, they were clearly long robes.

Amongst the nine people depicted, three had crowns on their heads. Two had long hair, which draped over their shoulders. One was even completely bald. They exuded an imposing power that was difficult to describe. It seemed as if each statue represented some powerful Dao that demonstrated a path of heaven and earth.

Anyone who caught sight of these statues would be stunned, and filled with a sensation of ancient glory. The statues were not standing upright; rather all of them were kneeling down on one knee, with both arms stretched upward, heads bowed.

Objects could be seen within their upstretched hands!

There was some sort of wheel-shaped treasure, something that was clearly an extraordinary sword, as well as a glowing jade bottle. Each statue had a different treasure. The flickering glow created by the treasures created multiple glowing afterimages. Meng Hao and the others couldn't help but gasp.

In the hands up one of the statues could be seen two ancient scrolls! The features of this statue strongly resembled Han Bei!

On the back of the statue was a gigantic crack, which had obviously been rent by lightning from Heaven. It was impossible to say how many years has passed since that had happened.

If this was all there was to it, it wouldn't be a bit deal. But there was more. Meng Hao was shocked, and everyone else was panting. In the center of the nine incredible statues was the object to which they were all bowing... a bronze, circular cauldron!

A voice sounded out in Meng Hao's mind: "Square without, circular within; a trend of the Heavens!"

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As a quick reference, here are the two types of Chinese "ding cauldrons" that are being talked about. Square cauldron. Round cauldron. The character for cauldron "ding" is pretty cool. Looks just like a cauldron! 鼎

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ding\\_%28vessel%29](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ding_%28vessel%29)

# Chapter 160: No Meng in the Nine Families

The outside was an enormous square cauldron, whereas inside there was a Heavenly circular cauldron. This circular cauldron was truly a Heavenly trend!

Meng Hao's mind buzzed as he saw this. Having experienced the world of the enormous cauldron, he felt as if it contained something cosmic.

"Nine kneeling figures, nine pinnacles of the Heavens," muttered the gray-robed man, beginning to tremble. "These kneeling figures are not people, they obviously are referring to the will of the Heavens!"

"No, no. How could the cauldron be reversed? It shouldn't be like this. The heavens are circular and the earth is square. That's a generally acknowledged truth from ancient times. It's a law that was established tens and tens of thousands of year ago, a principle of heaven and earth.

"The cauldron should be circular on the outside and square on the inside. That would be correct. In that case, it would be as they say, the Heavens on the outside, above, the earth on the inside, beneath...." The man's body trembled even harder as he continued to mumble to himself. It seemed as if he just couldn't comprehend the world of this cauldron which was square on the outside and circular on the inside.

Xu Youdao stared blankly at the circular cauldron, his eyes radiating astonishment. It was impossible to tell what he was thinking.

Xie Jie's eyes narrowed. Despite his shock, he immediately produced a jade slip, within which he inscribed all of this.

Han Bei seemed to be in shock as well. She looked at the massive fissure on the back of the statue, and then a brilliant glow appeared in her eyes that was obviously veneration for her ancestors.

"I understand," said the gray-robed man, his voice quavering. "The heavens are circular, the earth is square. A circular cauldron on the outside becomes the Heavens, the square cauldron on the inside becomes

the earth. That would be in accord with the will of the Heavens, but this... This embodies evil! This represents the earth covering the Heavens. This is the same as burying the Heavens!!

“This way, the circular cauldron is the Heavens, the square cauldron is the earth. This place.... is a tomb!!” Sharp astonishment filled his voice as he spoke. He slowly took three steps backward. He coughed up a mouthful of blood. His face was pale and his eyes shone brightly with astonishment. His hands flickered as if he were calculating something, and his voice began to grow louder.

“These nine worshippers are definitely pinnacles of the Heavens! They’ve just been embodied into these statues, which obviously represent the legendary Nine Mystical Stars. The Nine Mystical Stars are worshipping the cauldron. The Heavenly trend is solidified here. A bronze square cauldron, within which is buried the heart of the Heavens!

“How daring! How grand! A tomb in which the Heavens are buried inside the earth!! Just whose tomb is this? Willing to face death to steal luck from the Heavens! This is a coffin, and the Blessed Land outside is the tomb!

“Put it all together, and this place is no Blessed Land. It’s a Cursed Land! It’s a tomb of defiance against the Heavens!”

His words entered the ears of the others, and turned cold. Xie Jie’s and Xu Youdao’s expressions changed. Meng Hao took in a deep breath to settle his shaking nerves. The gray-robed man’s words resonated inside of him, creating a sense of familiarity. Perhaps this place... really was a tomb.

He thought back to the vision he had experienced outside of the cauldron, and of the man’s voice he had heard when the lightning struck it.

“You are unwilling to let me take this cauldron from here. Then... I will lay in rest here forever, waiting for the day on which you fall.”

Meng Hao took a deep breath and thought back to the other archaic voice he had heard from within the cauldron.

“It is thy wish for the vault of Heavens to replace the stars, to cover my eyes with the dome of the Heavens, the World Tree would not capitulate, shattered under the stars. My master may be slumbering, but can he still exist under the same sky as Ji?!”

The voice seemed to echo in Meng Hao’s mind. His heart beat rapidly, and he thought back to the legend of the Spring and Autumn tree 1, and how the World Tree had voluntarily collapsed rather than acquiesce to the Heavens. He also thought of the destruction of the Ancient Doom Clan 2, as well as the flag of three streamers 3, which was currently inside the Blood Immortal mask. That flag had the character Ji written on it!

He also thought back to the requirement of the Blood Immortal to refine the bloodline of Ji!

“Fellow Daoists,” said Han Bei, “there’s no need to be alarmed.” Her clear, bell-like voice echoed out. Although it couldn’t outmatch the sound of the thunder, everyone could hear her clearly. “I don’t know whether or not this place is a tomb, but as you all can see, the person holding those ancient scrolls is my ancestor. The statue has been cracked open by Heavenly Thunder. That was how the first volume of the Classic of Time came out of this place, and was eventually acquired by later generations.” She turned to look at Meng Hao and the others. “In fact, of all the treasures here, only these scriptures can be taken away. All the other statues are perfect and unharmed.

“I’ve attended quite a few secret meetings; the fact that you all saw my message shows that you are destined to be here. You all have your own reasons for coming here, and are surely backed by powerful forces. Naturally, I am aware of that, and really don’t care who you represent.” She continued in a soft voice, “I only hope that for the sake of the Nine Mystical Stars, you will all keep your promises. Right now, we can only look, but when we draw near to the statues, I have a way to acquire the two scriptures. Then we can make copies for everyone.

“Actually, my only real purpose in coming here is to pay my respects in front of the statue of my ancestor.” Her voice seemed to contain some strange power that made everyone calmer. The gray-robed man’s

complexion slowly returned to normal. Now that Meng Hao thought about it, he began to wonder if the man had purposefully said such crazy things.

He was also a bit skeptical of Han Bei's words "for the sake of the Nine Mystical Stars."

"It's not far now," continued Han Bei. "However, next I must ask for help from Fellow Daoists Xu and Sima. There will be more lightning after this point, and the going will be more difficult. Originally, we should never have had the chance we do. But the year that the first volume of the classic flew out, it carved out a path. Inside the path, we will be much safer. More importantly, the power of the lightning will not be as strong.

"Furthermore, it will have intermittent periods of weakness. Those times will be short, only about one hour. However, it should be plenty of time to get through safely. I picked the starting time of our mission to coincide with the lightning's weak period!" Her gaze swept across them, and then she looked up, as if she were waiting for something.

After about ten breaths, the lightning in the area began to grow dimmer. It was still dense, but the pressure that bore down on them from it was significantly less. It was definitely not as fearsome as before.

"The lightning will be weak for one hour. Fellow Daoist Xu, Fellow Daoist Sima, hurry!" Her eyes shined as she lifted her right hand. A dark piece of ancient jade flew out and floated above them, seeming to point in a certain direction.

Muttering to himself, Xu Youdao flew forward. The gray-robed Cultivator seemed to have completely returned to normal. He accompanied Xu Youdao. The power of late Foundation Establishment roiled out from them. One of them was clearly emanating Wood element Qi. But then the gray-robed Cultivator began to emit a Dust element Qi, which completely eclipsed the Wood Qi. As they walked forward, a yellowish brown glow rippled out.

Both of them produced magical items, and Han Bei took in a deep breath. She waved her hand, and her ancient Time jade emitted a brilliant glow. Everyone proceeded cautiously.

Because of the temporary reduction in lightning, they were able to fly forward relatively quickly.

However, the closer they got to the statues, the more dense the lightning grew. Rumbling booms filled the sky. Lightning crashed down, some of it slamming into the ground very close to the group of five. Their hearts trembled as they proceeded.

Xu Youdao and the gray-robed Cultivator proceeded together with seeming difficulty. Soon, cracks appeared on their treasured items. Without hesitation, they pulled out even more lightning-repelling items. Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever, and he said nothing. He made no indication whatsoever that he would offer assistance. He had already accomplished his task, and from here on out, they would not likely be asking him to do anything.

This place was dangerous, but all of the others had chosen to come here and were well-equipped.

Within Meng Hao's hand was the good luck charm. That was the trick he had up his sleeve.

Time passed slowly, and gradually the group grew closer and closer to the statues. The faces of Xu Youdao and the gray-robed Cultivator grew ashen. They were reaching their limit. As the statues got closer and closer, the lightning grew more and more dense. They had already gone through multiple magical items, and were coughing up blood. They couldn't proceed.

Suddenly, a lightning bolt began to descend, heading directly toward their group. Seeing this, the faces of Xu Youdao and the others flickered. The ancient Time jade that Han Bei wielded suddenly emitted a bright shield. When the lightning bolt slammed into the shield, a massive explosion rippled out. Han Bei coughed up a mouthful of blood, as did all of the others. The glow of electricity surrounded them, and their faces drained of blood. This was especially true of Xu Youdao and the gray-robed man, whose bodies trembled.

The lightning dissipated into curving sparks of electricity, and everyone

heaved sighs of relief. They looked about, their faces filled with even more caution than before.

“Fellow Daoist Han,” said Xu Youdao, turning to stare at Han Bei. “Didn’t you say that the lightning would become weaker? Why was that bolt now so powerful?!”

Meng Hao wiped the blood from his mouth, but his eyes were shining. The fragments of lightning within his body were being sucked in by the lightning flag. It seemed to be changing again.

Actually, though he looked injured, after coughing up the blood, he was fine. However, he continued to force his face to look pale.

Wiping the blood from her mouth, Han Bei coldly replied, “You all chose to come here. There is no way you were unaware that this place is not suitable for Foundation Establishment Cultivators. Were it not for my understanding of this place, were it not for this ancient Time jade, were it not for some other things that we all know about, then we wouldn’t be walking through this place. We would not even have been able to enter the cauldron.

“As far as the lightning, it is weakened at the moment. However, there still exists the possibility that bolts will fall that have not been weakened.” She turned to Xie Jie. “Elder Brother Xie, having come this far, we’ve now reached the point where you must act. This location also holds what the Black Sieve Sect seeks, which they plan to fish out with the Hundred Spirits Tower. They seem to be ignoring our activities in here, but undoubtedly they are keeping guard outside.

“We both know that they don’t dare to enter this place. Other than descendants of the Nine Great Families, anyone who enters here will die. The Nine Great Families have experienced decline in the Southern Domain, to the extent that they can’t measure up to the current generation of Clans, and are mostly comprised of mortals. Ones who can practice Cultivation are usually herded up by various Sects. We have the appearance of elegance, but in fact we are little more than livestock. You and I are simply curious tools to the Black Sieve Sect.”



Xie Jie was quiet for a moment, and then smiled. “Actually, what makes me the most curious is that the Nine Great Families do not include Meng. Furthermore, not one of these nine statues resembles Fellow Daoist Meng at all. So, how was he able to enter this place?” He gave Meng Hao a deeply meaningful look.

If you want to a refresher on the legend of the Spring and Autumn tree, check out Chapter 109: The Legend of Doom ↩

If you want to review the Doom Clan info, check out chapter 19 (link above) and Chapter 128: Li Daoyi’s Sixth Matrix ↩

If you forgot about the flag of three streamers, and the Ji information, check out Chapter 137: 10th Patriarch of the Wang Clan ↩

# Chapter 161: Ultimate Vexation Appears!

It wasn't just Xie Jie whose attention turned to Meng Hao. Xu Youdao and the gray-robed Cultivator also gave him deep, meaningful looks.

His expression was calm, but inwardly, his mind flashed with understanding. Now he knew why everyone had looked at him so strangely when they had entered the large Cauldron.

The Nine Great Names didn't include Meng, so once he entered, they must all have reached the conclusion that he was using an assumed name.

Even he was a bit uncertain regarding this revelation. He looked through the sheets of lightning toward the nine massive statues. Sure enough, amongst them could be found faces similar to Xu Youdao, the gray-robed Cultivator, and even Xie Jie.

These statues depicted their ancestors. They had surnames which could be traced back to ancient times, Clans which some people called the Nine Great Families.

"Am I of the Nine Great Families...?" Meng Hao asked himself. Moments later, a smile appeared on his face, although it was a bit cold. He was sure that he was not of the Nine Great Families.

He had remembered how upon entering the enormous cauldron, the copper mirror had grown hot within the bag of the Cosmos. If that was all, it wouldn't be enough evidence to prove anything. But Meng Hao had also suddenly recalled how the mirror had grown hot during the secret meeting, when Han Bei had produced the information regarding the first volume of the Classic of Time.

"Han Bei must have prepared for this day for a long time," he thought, "and it wasn't just one secret meeting she attended. The information she sent out was not restricted just to late Foundation Stage Cultivators, but more importantly, to only bloodline members of the Nine Great Families." With all this scattered information, he came to the conclusion that it must have something to do with the copper mirror.

“Just what is this mirror exactly? It can agitate the Qi of wild beasts to explode, it has an astonishing power of duplication, and apparently has helped me achieve my goals by using underhanded means. Even though I’m not of the Nine Great Families, I was still able to enter this place. All these various thoughts flashed through Meng Hao’s mind in quick succession. Only a moment or two passed between Xie Jie’s question and Meng Hao’s response.

“Whether or not the Nine Great Families include Meng, I don’t really know,” he said coolly. “But the fact that I entered the cauldron and made it to this point raises a very important issue.” The look on his face made it very clear what he was thinking.

Xie Jie’s eyes flickered, and he furrowed his brow. Meng Hao’s words left him speechless. The words were a defense in themselves, even though he neither admitted nor denied anything; or perhaps he had done both. Xie Jie looked at him for a long moment.

The response had been clear; Meng Hao didn’t know. But maybe the reason he was here was because he was indeed of the Nine Great Families.

“Fellow Daoist Meng provided you with his answer,” said Han Bei calmly. “Elder Brother Xie, I know that you have some Green Cloaking Pills on your person that the Sect Leader gave you specifically for use in this place. I know this already, there’s no need for you to confirm or deny it.”

Xie Jie was quiet for a moment. He looked around at the lightning, his face somber. Then he slapped the top of his head and spit out a small green pill the size of a fingernail. As soon as it flew out, it exploded, sending large amounts of green Qi out in all directions. As it did, the lightning began to grow slightly transparent, as if they were being cloaked.

The five of them continued onward several hundreds of meters, with Xu Youdao and the gray-robed Cultivator taking the lead.

A hundred meters later, Xie Jie, his face grim, said, “I only have three Green Cloaking Pills!” He spat out another pill, and they raced forward amidst the indistinct lightning.

With the power of the two Green Cloaking Pills, they were able to reach the location of the nine statues. The statues were awe-inspiring, as was the cauldron in their center, which seemed as if it could contain the Heavens.

An ancient Qi circled about the area, brushing against their faces and making them feel as if they had traveled back to a primordial time. It was like they could feel the boundlessness of that era.

Han Bei was incapable of concealing the excitement within her eyes. She panted as she looked up at the statue of her ancestor. Next to her, Xu Youdao, the gray-cloaked man, and even Xie Jie stood by silently, all of them gazing at the statues of their respective ancestors.

Meng Hao had no way to comprehend what was going through their minds. His face was the calmest of the bunch as he looked at the statues one by one. Finally his gaze fell upon the circular cauldron that represented the heavens.

Even as he looked at the cauldron, something in his peripheral vision caught his attention. Something was moving on one of the statues. Meng Hao's eyes immediately darted over, and then opened wide.

There, upon the shoulder of the statue that resembled the gray-cloaked Cultivator, some dust had fallen away to reveal something. It was square, and looked gelatinous and somewhat elastic, like a slab of meat jelly.

It was pure and white, and after looking upon it, the first reaction of most people would be to try to eat it. The object sat on the statue's shoulder, wriggling a bit, causing more dust to fall down. Meng Hao stared, eyes wide, mouth agape. The thing seemed alive! Suddenly, it flew off of the statue's shoulder and onto its head. Then it leaped up into the air. A crack appeared on the surface of the meat jelly, which opened up into an enormous mouth. Instantly, the lightning in the sky crackled. Ten lightning bolts fell down directly onto the meat jelly.

It chewed for a bit, then stopped, as if it were digesting the lightning. Meng Hao gaped in astonishment as it dropped to the ground and then hop, hop, hopped over to land on the circular cauldron. It remained there motionless.

It wasn't just Meng Hao who saw this happen. The noise caused by the lightning and the meat jelly was incredible, causing Han Bei and the others to all look over. Han Bei's eyes narrowed, whereas Xie Jie's open wider. He gasped, and the two of them exchanged a shocked, knowing glance.

"That's..."

The gray-robed Cultivator suddenly said, "That must be what the Black Sieve Sect needs the Hundred Spirits Tower for. They want to drag out Ultimate Vexation." A mysterious look appeared in his eyes. Within his pupils appeared magical symbols as he attempted to gain information. This had nothing to do with his Cultivation base, but something specific to his eyes.

Before Han Bei and Xie Jie could say anything, the meat jelly suddenly jumped up. The face of an old man, his eyes closed, magically appeared on its surface. His nose twitched, and his eyes opened. They appeared to be filled with frustration. The meat jelly suddenly flew up and shot toward the exit of the square cauldron. But then it stopped in mid-air, as if it were hesitating. It floated there for a moment and consumed more lightning.

Seeing this, the eyes of the five Cultivators gleamed.

"Why is this thing called Ultimate Vexation?" Meng Hao suddenly asked of the gray-robed Cultivator.

"Even I don't know," was the reply. "I haven't been able uncover any information about its origin. The Black Sieve Sect has likely spent much more time researching it. The little I do know is that as long as it has existed, it has been called Ultimate Vexation."

"I couldn't care less what that thing is called," said Xu Youdao. "Half an hour has already passed. If Fellow Daoist Han can't retrieve the rest of the Classic of Time soon, then our whole trip here will have been a waste!"

Without a word, Han Bei sat down cross-legged beneath the statue of her ancestor. Her hands made incantation gestures, and her ancient jade began to emit a greenish glow as it rotated around her. Meng Hao's eyes glittered and he stepped a bit closer to her.

Everything around them was relatively quiet. Only the claps of thunder roared out. Time passed, the space of roughly one hundred breaths. Han Bei's eyes suddenly opened, and the sound of incantation words floated from her mouth. Xu Youdao, the gray-robed Cultivator, and Xie Jie all stood around, as vigilant as ever.

Suddenly, the sound of Han Bei's incantation ceased, and she spat out a mouthful of blood onto the ancient jade. It emitted a blinding green light and flew toward the hands of the statue.

It didn't move incredibly fast, and actually wobbled back and forth a bit in the air as it moved. The blood drained from Han Bei's face, as if she were having trouble controlling it. As the jade neared the statue, the two scripture scrolls in the statue's hands began to glow brightly. Cracks appeared on their surfaces, and a boom echoed out. Suddenly, two pieces of jade exploded out from within the two scrolls.

Everyone clearly saw this happen, and though they might have their suspicions as to what was happening, it was obvious that two pieces of jade were flying away from the exploded scripture scrolls. Whistling sounds echoed out from them as they shot out.

The two jade pieces flew out, seemingly completely out of control, not controlled by anything or anyone. They seemed to be shooting out in an attempt to leave the square cauldron.

Before they could go very far, though, they were grabbed by the greenish glow emanated from Han Bei's ancient jade. It was as if they were all connected somehow. The two escaping pieces of jade suddenly stopped in mid air; they began to shake, as if they were struggling. A loud buzzing sound emanated out from them.

Han Bei coughed up some blood, and immediately seemed to grow listless. Exhaustion covered her face, and suddenly, her ancient piece of jade slipped out of her control and fell toward the ground.

In that instant, the other two pieces of jade suddenly began to fly off into the distance. It was very sudden, and there was no time for anyone to think. Xu Youdao's eyes flickered, and his body shot up into the air as he

flew toward one of the jade pieces. The gray-robed man's eyes narrowed, but he too stepped up and shot forward, a green beam of light that shot toward the second jade piece. As for Xie Jie, he flew up and toward the original jade piece, a look of suspicion on his face.

“No fighting, Fellow Daoists,” cried Han Bei. “Great tribulation will come on anyone not of my bloodline who touches those items! I have a method to bring together the three ancient pieces of jade.” She coughed up some more blood.

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I found a lot of different articles about various varieties of meat jelly. Here is one relatively general article.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aspic>

From what I understand, most meat jellies in China are made from pork. In any case, the ingredients of meat jellies are not very important to the story. Check out the picture to get an idea of what it's supposed to look like.

<http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=%E7%9A%AE%E5%86%BB&FORM=HDRSC2&mkt=zh-CN>

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At the end of this chapter, Er Gen challenges the audience to guess the meaning of the name “Ultimate Vexation”

# Chapter 162: Crafty Schemes

Her words were essentially meaningless. Xu Youdao increased his speed.

Three people, three different directions. They sped forward, their lightning-repelling items glittering. They flew forward in the twinkling of an eye. Meng Hao also took action; however, he didn't rush in pursuit of the jades. Instead, he headed toward Han Bei, who seemingly had lost control over her own ancient jade.

At the same time Xu Youdao reached the jade he had been pursuing. He flicked his sleeve, collecting it into his bag of holding. Throughout the process, he avoided any dangers whatsoever.

"Hahaha! Fellow Daoist Han, I've retrieved the item for you. I'll keep it with me for now and give you a copy later." At the same time as his laughter rang out, Xie Jie's eyes suddenly glittered brightly. Anyone looking at him would see the same suspicions that existed moments before on his face. However, Han Bei was not faking; the anxiety and enmity on her face after all the coughing up of blood were real. And yet, Xu Youdao had succeeded; Xie Jie seemed to no longer suspect anything. He increased his speed.

As he shot forward, a lightning bolt descended toward him. He spat a third Green Cloaking Pill out of his mouth. A boom sounded out as the pill activated, completely concealing Xie Jie from any lightning. He bit his tongue, spitting out some blood that turned into a blood mist. As he passed through it, his speed increased dramatically. In an instant, he was upon the piece of jade. With the flick of a sleeve, he collected it into his bag of holding.

Xie Jie's eyes burned as he glanced toward the gray-robed Cultivator. He was rocketing forward, seemingly focused on pursuing the jade piece, but doing so with caution. Having seen Xu Youdao and Xie Jie's successes, he increased his speed, and within a moment was almost in the position to acquire the last piece of jade.

All eyes were focused on him. Meng Hao watched him flick his sleeve to



gather up the piece of jade. Suddenly, for some inexplicable reason, the lightning in the area began to accumulate. In the blink of an eye, ten bolts of lightning shot down.

The gray-robed Cultivator's lightning-repelling treasure was simply incapable of resisting, and shattered. His face fell, and he was just about to do everything in his power to evade, when a shocking thunderclap sounded out. Everyone watched as the man's body was transformed into bits of floating ash. Even his bag of holding was destroyed.

Only the ancient jade remained, floating beneath the lightning, undamaged. Bits of ash and bone, the remnants of the gray-robed Cultivator, slowly drifted down to the ground.

Han Bei coughed up some more blood. Her face was pale, but she gritted her teeth and raised her trembling hands toward the drifting piece of jade.

It shook, then changed directions, shooting back toward Han Bei and Meng Hao. Based on its trajectory, it seemed it was actually heading toward Meng Hao.

"Fellow Daoist Meng, be careful!" shouted Han Bei shrilly.

Everything was happening too quickly. Seeing the death of the gray-robed Cultivator caused Xie Jie's expression to change. A horrified look appeared on Xu Youdao's face. However, at the moment, both of them were looking at the piece of jade the was descending toward Meng Hao and Han Bei. The death of the gray-robed Cultivator seemed to have been an accident that had nothing to do with the ancient jade.

The two of them flew forward simultaneously. From the look of it, if Meng Hao attempted to interfere, they would join forces to destroy him. However, their speed was a bit slower than his. Even moving as fast as possible, it seemed that they would arrive a moment too late.

Meng Hao, eyes glittering, shot forward, a barely perceptible mocking smile forming on the corner of his mouth. The three of them closed in on the piece of jade.

It was at this moment that the closed eyes of the meat jelly floating in

the mid-air suddenly opened. It caught sight of the three people flying toward the jade, and suddenly it shot forward with indescribable speed. In a flash, it landed on Xu Youdao's head.

Xu Youdao's body shook, and a look of astonishment appeared on his head. "Fellow Daoist Xie, help me..."

Before Xie Jie could even react to his words, the meat jelly opened its mouth. Suddenly, massive amounts of lightning bore down. It seemed as if they were entering the mouth of the meat jelly. But by the time they disappeared, Xu Youdao's body was nothing more than ash in the wind.

He didn't even have time to scream.

Xie Jie gasped, and his face flickered. He suddenly stopped moving, his heart pounding. He stared in astonishment at the floating meat jelly; his scalp began to go numb.

Without Xu Youdao and Xie Jie pursuing the ancient piece of jade, it quickly arrived at Meng Hao. He chuckled, shooting forward, and then actually moving out of the path of the piece of jade. Now, it was heading directly toward Han Bei. She gaped in shock, as did Xie Jie, who was still reeling from the actions of the meat jelly moments ago.

Meng Hao laughed, looking back and forth between Han Bei and Xie Jie. "Your act could fool gray-robles, but did you really think you could fool me?" A look of ridicule appeared in his eyes. He spit out the lightning flag. The surrounding lightning was instantly thrown into chaos.

Hearing Meng Hao's words, Han Bei frowned and Xie Jie's eyes flashed. They said nothing.

"The appearance of that meat jelly was not something you anticipated, and therefore Xu Youdao lost his life. That was an accident, not part of your scheming. In any case," he continued coldly, "with Xu Youdao gone, your three person plan cannot be completed. I think now you should consider allowing me to take his place, assuming I wish to." He smiled.

The lightning flag next to him sent out ripples, causing the surrounding lightning to roil even more violently. Not wanting to attract the attention

of the meat jelly, he pulled the lightning flag close to him and suppressed the rippling.

An unsightly expression covered Xie Jie's face. Meng Hao's craftiness left him awestruck. During their entire journey, he had barely interacted at all with Han Bei and Xu Youdao. He'd assumed no one could possibly connect the three of them together. And yet Meng Hao had.

"It was Xu Youdao's final words that made it clear to you," said Han Bei with a little smile. "Fellow Daoist Meng, you are very perceptive. I can't help but admire you in this." There didn't seem to be any anxiety on her face whatsoever. "It's true. There can only be three people in the end. I'll be honest with you, Fellow Daoist. I've betrayed the Black Sieve Sect because of this place. Originally Xie Jie and I received authorization from the Sect to come here. Unfortunately, we never imagined that the object the Sect sought, Ultimate Vexation, would be here. And we never predicted that Xu Youdao would fall." She straightened her hair and smiled. Despite her beauty, he had been careful of her machinations from the beginning. She was clever, but Xie Jie couldn't compare at all.

As she spoke, Han Bei lifted her hand and made a grasping motion. A blue streak of light shot toward her from the position where Xu Youdao had been killed. Moments later, a gray streak appeared from where the gray-robed Cultivator had died. They circled around in the air. As they did, Han Bei opened her mouth and spit out a yellow strand. The three strands intertwined and began to emit a bright light.

The yellow strand was obviously from the Li woman, which Han Bei had somehow retrieved after her death.

"In this place of treasures of the Nine Great Families, only the Han Clan treasure can be retrieved. The rest of the statues have not been damaged, and are therefore still sealed. We originally needed strands from three bloodlines, and power from three people, to be able to open the true location of the Time refining treasure of the Han Clan. Now, we have no choice other than to use Xu Youdao's strand. Brother Meng," she said earnestly, "let's not bring up everything from before. I hope we can agree on that. If you agree, then you can have your copy of the Time refining

treasure. I'm willing to swear an oath on the name of my illustrious Ancestors!" She slapped her bag of holding to produce a Feng Shui compass. She quickly erased the branding inside of it.

"This object," she said, "can serve as an expression of my apology. Actually, the exit I spoke of earlier is not really an exit. That place will only return you here. This Feng Shui compass is a Sect treasure. You can use it to get out of this place. However, it won't take you out of the Blessed Land, It will merely take you out of the square cauldron." The Feng Shui compass floated over to Meng Hao.

He eyed it expressionlessly, casting his Spiritual Sense into it for a moment. Then he exchanged a glance with Han Bei. Their eyes glittered simultaneously. Xie Jie looked at them, his face grim. He let out a cold snort.

Meng Hao took the Feng Shui compass, his expression the same as usual. He examined it further with Spiritual Sense. After confirming that it was a teleportation device, he nodded.

Han Bei's smile grew even more beautiful. She gave Meng Hao a slight bow, then looked over at Xie Jie, who was glaring at Meng Hao. He made no attempt to hide his displeasure. He and Han Bei had been a couple for some time. Once their mission here was completed, they were to return to the Sect and be officially united as beloved.

Han Bei took a deep breath and then waved her beautiful hand. The three colored strands interlocked and flew out. They grew longer, creating a complex pattern which then shot toward the statue of the Han ancestor and into the crack on its back. At the same time, Han Bei bit her tongue and then spit out some blood. The three strands turned bright red, and continued to stream into the crack.

Next, the strands separated. Han Bei grabbed one, and the other two shot toward Meng Hao and Xie Jie respectively.

Meng Hao's eyes glittered as he grabbed the strand. As soon as he touched it, he felt the copper mirror growing hot within the bag of the Cosmos.

“The objects held aloft by the nine statues are not real. They are mere illusions. The true treasures are inside the circular cauldron. No one can take them, not even someone of one of the nine Bloodlines. However, the body of the Han ancestor was struck with Tribulation Lightning, and was cracked. Therefore, the Time refining treasure within the cauldron is the only of the nine that can be acquired!

“The only way to get it, is to break open the circular cauldron. With our Cultivation bases, that would be impossible. Brother Meng! Xie, dear! Please bolster the power of my bloodline. We will use the power of the ancestor statue to retrieve the item!” Her eyes glowed mysteriously as she looked at Meng Hao and Xie Jie, a sweet smile on her face.

# Chapter 163: Tender Killing

A roaring sound filled the world within the cauldron. The lightning in the region danced about, and the meat jelly seemed to have been frightened. Its attention now appeared to be fixed upon Meng Hao and the others.

Han Bei's voice rang out. "I shall now employ my bloodline magic. Brother Meng and Xie, dear, please assist me with all your power." She bit her tongue, spitting more blood out onto the strands that wound into the crack on the statue. It began to emit a red glow.

A droning roar sounded out, and the entire statue began to tremble. Vast quantities of dust poured off of it. Meng Hao suddenly felt as if the strand in his hand was pulling at his Cultivation base, as well as his Spiritual Sense.

His eyes flickered, but his face remained still. Next to him, Xie Jie's eyes glittered brightly as he poured power from his Cultivation base, as well as Spiritual Sense, into the strand he held. He looked at Meng Hao, killing intent flickering within his eyes. Then his gaze shifted to Han Bei, and his gaze grew warm. It could be said that the two of them were a 'green plum and a bamboo horse,' childhood sweethearts. When they were young, there had been some conflict between them, but as of now, it seemed that Han Bei really had worked her way into his heart.

Suddenly, the roaring grew in intensity. Han Bei's face grew pale. She was in control of the three threads; Xie Jie and Meng Hao were simply providing the assisting power with their Cultivation bases and Spiritual Sense. They had no way to do anything to cause the statue to do anything. They poured their power in, while Han Bei employed the power of her bloodline.

Using her bloodline to touch the spirit of the ancestor statue was magic that only she could perform. If anyone else tried to touch the statue's spirit, their Cultivation base would wither up. It was something that neither Meng Hao nor Xie Jie could do.

About ten breaths worth of time passed. Booming sounds filled the sky. Suddenly the kneeling statue emitted a roar as... its eyes suddenly began to shine, as if it were alive. Its body... slowly began quiver, as if it were preparing to stand.

Han Bei's face grew paler, her eyes brighter. She spat out more blood, causing her Blood Qi to enter into the statue. The whole statue trembled violently, as if an earthquake were shaking it. Then, the massive statue... stood up!

Its eyes emitted a dull glow, and a mysterious pressure filled the entire area. It slowly lowered its hands. As Meng Hao watched, the images were burned indelibly into his memory.

He took a deep breath, continuing to provide Cultivation base power and Spiritual Sense. Han Bei's body shook. This was real trembling, not an act; her face was as pale as a corpse's. But determination radiated out of her eyes, and she spat out more blood.

Boom!

The statue slowly outstretched its right hand, pointing with its index finger. The finger seemed to be filled with an indescribable power; it descended toward the circular cauldron situated in the middle of the nine statues.

Meng Hao's eyes narrowed and gleamed mysteriously.

"I need more power!" said Han Bei, her voice urgent. Without hesitation, Xie Jie poured more power into the strand he held.

Meng Hao's eyes shined as he did the same. Some of the color returned to Han Bei's face, but moments later she spat out more blood, filling the statue with more power. Its finger continued to approach the cauldron; it seemed the cauldron would open at any moment.

At this exact time, however, the descending finger suddenly changed directions. It no longer headed toward the circular cauldron, but toward Xie Jie. It moved with incredible speed, causing a look of complete shock to cover his face.

“Han Bei, what are you doing?!” cried Xie Jie, throwing the strand away from himself. His eyes filled with intense terror, and he shot backward. Meng Hao’s eyes flickered. He opened his mouth, and the lightning mist flew out, preventing Xie Jie from moving backward. His body stopped moving. His words were still echoing out by the time the massive finger reached him.

The finger barely touched him, and his entire body exploded with a bang, even his Dao Pillar. In an instant, everything disintegrated; his life was completely gone.

He didn’t let out a blood-curling scream, only a furious roar that lingered on after his death. An orange strand curled up where his body used to be, which then entered the statue’s finger.

His bag of holding rose up and flew over to Han Bei. She grabbed it and immediately produced a small black vial. She crushed it, and a phantom figure floated up that looked in every way exactly like Han Bei. She absorbed it in through her ears, mouth and nose.

All of this takes some time to describe, but actually happened in space of only a few breaths. Meng Hao watched everything with the same expression as always, as if he had been expecting it to happen. He was completely expressionless, although his eyes flickered.

“Many thanks for your assistance, Fellow Daoist Meng,” said Han Bei with a sweet smile. She bowed slightly toward him.

“Fellow Daoist Han, it was a clever move to exterminate your dear Xie,” he said coolly. He was not surprised, because the violet Feng Shui compass she had given him now was not just unbranded, it also contained a message.

In the message, she had directly told him that she planned to kill Xie Jie, and when it happened, he shouldn’t be alarmed.

“When the Black Sieve Sect captured me and my clansmen, it seemed as if they would treat us well. But in actuality, we were nothing more than animals in a cage. Xie Jie was the worst; he treated me horribly since childhood. After we grew up, he had further desires.... It’s only natural for



me to slay him. If I hadn't, then everything we acquired today would belong to the Black Sieve Sect. Now, we can share everything between the two of us."

She smiled at him and said, "Brother Meng is surpassingly astute, I don't dare to attempt to deceive you. That is why I left the message on the Feng Shui compass. I always accomplish what I set out to do. Today, the Time refinement technique will become ours. From now on, you don't need to do anything more."

Her expression was sincere, although she sighed inwardly. Of the six people who had begun the mission, all had their own thoughts and plans. Only Meng Hao had seen through everything and come through it all.

People had fallen around him, but he remained unscathed. This caused fear to grow in Han Bei's heart, as well as admiration. Had any mistakes been made along the way, Meng Hao would have been dead.

Because of this, she was subconsciously afraid of provoking him. Therefore, her words were actually true, and revealed her true intentions.

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever. He said nothing, just simply nodded. However, the lightning mist surrounded him. If Han Bei did anything threatening, he would call down the lightning; death would be assured.

Han Bei took a deep breath and looked at him. She abandoned any last bit of scheming. The journey here had been difficult, and she had used up all her tricks. She really did not want to meet any more mishaps. Her hand flickered an incantation, and the massive statue shook, then began to reach back toward the circular cauldron.

When it touched it, the entire world within the square cauldron shook. The lid of the circular cauldron slowly tilted up, and a violet Qi began to pour out of it. Inside, Meng Hao caught a glimpse of three jade pages floating up. Their appearance seemed to coincide with that of the violet Qi, and they hadn't completely emerged from the cauldron, as if they might sink back in at any time.

Han Bei's eyes filled with a bright glow, and she gasped. Her right hand

slapped her bag of holding, and a small clay jar appeared, about the size of a person's head.

It flew up into the air, transforming into a beam of light that shot toward the circular cauldron. As it neared, cracks spread out across its surface and it exploded, sending the ash that had been inside shooting forward.

Within the ash were what appeared to be ten phantom images. There were men and women, and their ages varied, but they all resembled each other; these must be Clan members of the same bloodline.

This was not just random ash; it was ash collected upon the cremation of various Han Clan members, and contained life force. The figures spread out, and then bowed respectfully toward the circular cauldron.

“Bloodline of Patriarch Han, according to the ancient agreement, the bloodline remains, Patriarch, please return....” As the phantoms spoke, they entered the violet Qi.

At the same time, the statue of the Han Clan Patriarch stretched out its palm and pressed it against the cauldron.

The instant the figures entered the violet Qi and the statue pressed on the cauldron, it vibrated, emitting a droning sound that shook everything. Amidst the roaring, the phantom figures began to burn. As for the statue, it trembled violently. Starting at its feet, cracks spread across its entire body. Suddenly, it began to collapse into pieces.

From this day forward, there would no longer be nine statues in this place, but eight!

Han Bei shook as if some invisible power were rocking her. She took a few steps back and then spit up some blood. At the same time, a violet glow flew out from the crumbling statue. Meng Hao could clearly see the excitement which appeared in her eyes. Within the violet glow appeared to be a small, sleeping person. It suddenly shot toward Han Bei, hitting her between the eyebrows and merging into her.

“That’s what she came for!” thought Meng Hao, his eyes narrowing.

At the same time, because of the sacrifice of the ten Han Clan

phantoms, the three jade pages within the violet Qi freed themselves from the circular cauldron and flew out. As they did, a sound like a sigh could be heard from the circular cauldron.

As the sigh sounded out, one of the flying jade pages suddenly stopped and then spun backward toward the cauldron. The other two continued to fly forward.

## Chapter 164: That Bird's Qi...

The spot between Han Bei's eyebrows glowed with a violet light. Panting, she shot into the air after one of the pages. Meng Hao also leaped into the air, moving with as much speed as he could muster after the other page.

They flew up simultaneously and in different directions, dodging in and out of the lightning in pursuit of the jade pages. Just as each person was about to lay hands on their respective pages, the meat jelly, which had been observing them this whole time, suddenly sprang into action.

It's movement caused Meng Hao's expression to flicker and Han Bei's face to fall. Both of them were filled with fear.

The object itself wasn't dangerous, but it seemed to enjoy jumping onto peoples' heads, and then consuming lightning. In other words, its arrival heralded the onslaught of a sea of lightning!

"Dammit!" said Meng Hao, his eyes narrowing when he saw the meat jelly heading toward him. Han Bei, who was moving in a different direction, breathed a sigh of relief.

Keeping his eye on the meat jelly, Meng Hao grabbed the jade page and then shot backward as fast as possible. He caused the lightning mist to withdraw; it might be an effective tool to threaten others in this place, but would only serve to attract the meat jelly, and thus, more lightning. Unfortunately, it seemed he had acted too slowly.

He shot backward as fast as possible, but the meat jelly was clearly very persistent. In a flash, it was in front of Meng Hao. It shot downward, and appeared to be just about to land on Meng Hao's head.

Before it did, and before Meng Hao could even do anything, the meat jelly suddenly trembled. The face of the old man appeared on its surface once again. His eyes were wide open, and his expression was one of both disbelief and disgust. Suddenly, it opened its mouth and spoke.

"Dammit! Dammit! How come you have that damn bird's Qi on you?!" It hopped backward through the air as if it was completely disgusted with

Meng Hao and wouldn't even come near him. It flew back up and then suddenly vomited, as if it had just seen something so disgusting it was painful.

If that were all, then it wouldn't be a big deal. But then a flash of light could be seen as the meat jelly suddenly appeared in front of Han Bei. She watched in shock as it gulped down the jade paper in a single bite.

It started to chew, and when she saw this, Han Bei's scalp grew numb. She could do nothing but move backward.

"Gross, gross, gross...." said the face on the meat jelly, its expression twisted as it looked over at Meng Hao. It looked as if it was scared to even get close to him.

Meng Hao had a strange expression on his face as he looked at the retreating meat jelly. He glanced at horrified Han Bei.

She was silent for a moment, and then said, "Congratulations on acquiring the Time refining technique of the Han Clan, Fellow Daoist Meng. There are three jade pieces in total, but each page has a technique that can be used by itself." A complicated look appeared in her eye. Suddenly, the lightning in the area began to roar.

It rapidly increased in intensity, each and every bolt brimming with the fierce intensity it had at the beginning. The hour time period had passed. As of now, a lack of lightning-repelling objects equated to certain death and transformation into flying ash.

The sheets of lightning made Meng Hao's expression fall. Han Bei also looked shocked.

"You acquired the object, so it's yours, Brother Meng," said Han Bei hurriedly. "I will lay no claim to it. But I must ask you to take care for it well. Please do not lose it. Next time we meet, you must give me a copy. That was our agreement." As soon as the words were out of her mouth, she slapped her bag of holding. A violet Feng Shui compass appeared in her hands. It flashed, and then her body disappeared as she was teleported away. In that same instant, however, the meat jelly shot forward, borrowing some of the teleportation power to also leave the world of the

cauldron.

Meng Hao looked around at the vast fields of lightning, and then immediately pulled out the violet Feng Shui compass, which he had examined closely earlier. He poured Spiritual Sense into it, activating its teleportation power. In an instant, he was teleported away from the world of lightning.

When he reappeared, the sky above was dark, and the earth was trembling. Booms echoed out everywhere, and his Dao Pillars were instantly unstable. He immediately coughed up a mouthful of blood and staggered forward a few paces. He looked around.

He was in the wide plain, not far from the place where he had met up with Han Bei initially. He took a deep breath. Han Bei hadn't been lying; the Feng Shui compass did what she said it would.

He lifted his hand, within which was the good luck charm. He was just about to pour some Spiritual Sense into it and leave this bizarre Blessed Land, when suddenly a massive tower began to rise up from the earth off in the distance. Everything shook, and roaring filled the air.

He could see that this pillar was like a tower, and it emanated Qi. The Qi was not that of Core Formation or the Nascent Soul stage, but of Foundation Establishment!

This was the the Hundred Spirits Tower, constructed with the Dao Pillars of over two hundred Foundation Establishment Cultivators!

Meng Hao sucked in a deep breath when he saw the Hundred Spirits Tower. Surrounding the tower were phantom figures of hundreds of Cultivators. They emitted shrill howls which merged together into a powerful sound of grievance. The sound rose up into the heavens, causing everything to be dark.

From various directions, ten or so freshly acquired Dao Pillars flew through the air toward the tower and melded into it. The power spreading from the tower grew even more intense.

"I suppose the rest of the rogue Foundation Establishment Cultivators

who came here are all dead....” He was silent, struck by the extent of the Black Sieve Sect’s plotting. His Dao Pillars trembled inside of him. Were they not Perfect Dao Pillars, he wouldn’t be able to keep them under control.

“I can’t stay here any longer....” he thought. However, it was at this time that he cocked his head and stared off into the distance. His eyes glittered slightly, and he decided not to leave. Instead, he flew up and off into the distance.

He flew for the space of about ten breaths before stopping. There below him in the plain, he saw a group of four Cultivators sitting cross-legged in meditation. Around them circled a protective spell which seemed to be resisting the power of the Hundred Spirits Tower.

One of them, was none other than Lu Tao!

Meng Hao watched on as one of the four people coughed up some blood. His body suddenly exploded, and an illusory Dao Pillar flew out of him off into the sky.

After that, another Cultivator began to tremble. His eyes snapped open and he stared at Lu Tao. He laughed bitterly. “You despicable....” Before he could finish, his body was torn to pieces as his Dao Pillar flew out. The third person’s face grew pale as his body also was torn to shreds. His Dao Pillar flew off into the distance.

However, the death of these three people made the protective spell many times stronger than it had been just now. Lu Tao sat inside pale-face, gritting his teeth with dogged will. The power of this spell was the only thing resisting the suction force outside.

Meng Hao looked down. He could see clearly that the three Cultivators had been under Lu Tao’s control. In reality, their Dao Pillars had been blood sacrifices to protect Lu Tao. Their deaths had simply bolstered his spell.

Meng Hao, his face placid, descended toward Lu Tao. He landed next to the spell, looked down at Lu Tao, and gave a dry cough.

Lu Tao began to tremble. When he opened his eyes and gaze upon Meng Hao, a look of shock covered his face.

“So, it’s... Fellow Daoist Meng...” His face was pale, his voice anxious as he looked at Meng Hao.

“Nice spell,” said Meng Hao coolly. He spoke neither quickly nor slowly, but his words caused Lu Tao to feel extremely alarmed. From his perspective, it seemed that Meng Hao wasn’t being affected at all by the suction force.

“Fellow Daoist Meng, what... what do you want?” His heart was filled with deep anxiety. If Meng Hao interfered with the spell, then it would be broken. He could imagine what the suction force would do to him after that; his body would shatter and his Dao Pillars would fly into the sky to join all the others in the enormous tower.

“Tell me what the Thunderclap Leaf really does,” he said calmly, looking at Lu Tao within the spell.

“I already told you, Fellow Daoist Meng,” he blurted, growing even more nervous. “The Thunderclap Leaf...” Before he could continue, Meng Hao reached out and pushed down on the spell circulating around Lu Tao.

As he did, the spell trembled, and a small crack appeared on its surface. Terror flashed onto Lu Tao’s face.

“Stop, Fellow Daoist Meng, please... I’m not deceiving you. The Thunderclap Leaf really can...”

Meng Hao gave a cold snort and then pushed down again. A boom sounded out, and seven or eight more cracks appeared within the spell. Lu Tao could suddenly feel even more of the suction force that existed in the outside world seeping inside. His Dao Pillar trembled unstably. His scalp went numb; he was currently scared out of his wits.

“Thunderclap Leaves are rare in the Southern Domain,” he gushed, talking as fast as he possibly could. “Special techniques exist which can imbue them into magical items to increase their lightning power! Fellow Daoist Meng, listen to me, I have a jade slip here as evidence. Just read the



technique in the jade slip and you'll receive enlightenment!!" He produced a jade slip which he showed to Meng Hao. His entire body trembled, and a look of entreaty appeared on his face. His words sounded sincere, as if he weren't concealing anything.

"Still trying to fool me?" A cold light gleamed in Meng Hao's eye. His right index finger stabbed into the spell. A boom rippled out as more cracks filled the spell. There was even a wide hole in one place. The suction force poured in. Lu Tao's face twisted and he coughed up some blood. It looked as if his body would explode at any moment.

# Chapter 165: Sieve Net Thunder Tree!

“STOP!!!” shrieked Lu Tao, terror-stricken. His face completely drained of blood, and he felt as if the shadow of death were looming over him.

He clearly remembered the scene when he had entered this Blessed Land, how so many Cultivators had exploded, their Dao Pillars sucked away. He was from the Black Lands, and knew a secret method that he had been able to utilize to stay safe. But with Meng Hao here, he felt an incredible pressure weighing down upon him that he had never felt before.

Furthermore, it seemed that no matter what he said, Meng Hao wouldn't believe him. Meng Hao completely had the upper hand. Faced with such life-or-death danger, Lu Tao's schemes disappeared like ash into the wind.

“I'm telling the truth,” said Lu Tao pleadingly. “Thunderclap Leaves can be absorbed into magical treasures to imbue them with the power of lightning. Why don't you believe me!?” His voice was hoarse, and from the look on his face, he had been pushed to the limit and had nothing more he could say. His eyes suddenly seemed to flash with understanding. He gave a hoarse laugh, and his eyes filled with boldness born of desperation. “I get it. It's not that you don't believe me, it's that you want to kill me!

“Fine! Just shatter my spell, then. I, Lu, have already explained the Thunderclap Leaf's usage. If you're going to kill me, then just kill me. But you can forget about getting the information from my jade slip!” Gritting his teeth, Lu Tao pushed down hard on the jade slip. If Meng Hao was really going to destroy the spell, then he would crush it to make sure the fish died and the net was torn; everyone would lose.

Meng Hao looked calmly at Lu Tao. Some time passed, and then he sighed. He lifted his hand and pushed down again. A boom sounded out. What was destroyed, however, was not the spell, but rather the jade slip in Lu Tao's hand.

Meng Hao destroyed it, transforming it into pieces of ash.

This caused Lu Tao's face to fall and his heart to grow cold. Obviously,

this action on the part of Meng Hao indicated that... he didn't believe him!

"Tell me, or don't tell me. I'm out of patience," he said coolly. It's not that he didn't believe what Lu Tao said about the Thunderclap Leaves being able to imbue magical treasures with the power of lightning. But Lu Tao spoke his words too easily. They might be true, but Meng Hao couldn't imagine that the Thunderclap Leaves collected by Patriarch Reliance would be so simple.

A bitter smile appeared on Lu Tao's face, as if he had nothing left to say. Meng Hao nodded slightly, then began to press down onto the spell. This time, he would completely destroy it.

"I'LL TELL!!" Lu Tao's body was trembling, and his heart nearly collapsed into pieces. The shaking of his Dao Pillar turned into a look of resolve in his eyes, and a bitter smile on his lips.

"I'll tell you," he said, quivering. "But you have to swear that after I tell you, you won't do anything to damage my spell." He smiled a painful smile. Everything he had said before was filled with half-truths, and yet, none of it even touched on the real truth, the most important part. Facing up against death the way he was now, however, he had no choice but to be honest.

"Speak," said Meng Hao, his expression the same as ever, but his eyes shining mysteriously.

Lu Tao took a deep breath, and was silent for just a moment. Then, with a pained look, he slowly began to speak. "Thunderclap Leaves come from the Thunderclap Tree. But the Thunderclap Tree's real name is Sieve Net Thunder, or Mulberry Thunder Tree."

Meng Hao's expression was placid, and it was impossible to tell what he was thinking. He looked coolly at Lu Tao. This in turn caused indescribable terror to fill Lu Tao's heart. His anguished expression grew stronger, and the coldness within him completely encompassed his heart and filled his body. He began to tremble with fear.

"There's a legend about the Mulberry Thunder Tree. According to this legend, in ancient times there was an almighty being who achieved

enlightenment while sitting underneath a Sieve Net Thunder Tree. Heavenly Tribulation descended, desiring to wipe out this new Dao. The will of the lightning infected the tree. As for the almighty being, it split apart the Tribulation Lightning and then stepped into the stars.

“Though the almighty being departed, the Sieve Net Thunder Tree absorbed some of its Dao in addition to the power of the Tribulation Lightning. It was destroyed, and yet, a thousand years later, a sprout appeared within the dead trunk!

“Thus was born a tree that was mulberry, but not mulberry. Thunder, but not thunder. A Sieve Net Mulberry Thunder Tree!”

Meng Hao’s eyes glittered as he listened to Lu Tao, but he said nothing.

“In regards to the almighty being which achieved enlightenment underneath the Sieve Net Mulberry Thunder Tree, what he said that day beneath the tree was that if he could not achieve ultimate supremacy, he would rather his body be shattered, and stay underneath the tree for all eternity!” Lu Tao lowered his head as he spoke, hiding the stubbornness which shone in his eyes.

A strange expression appeared on Meng Hao’s face as he listened to the story. It seemed to him unlikely that Lu Tao was making this story up as he went.

“Countless ages have passed since the Sieve Net Mulberry Thunder Tree appeared. Eventually, it became part of the heart of the earth, which then caused more trees to sprout. Yet, they contained the experiences from events in ancient times. Because the will of the Heavens evolved, this tree was eventually able to cast off that which withered it. Today, it is as precious as phoenix feathers and qilin horns.”

Lu Tao was silent for a moment before continuing. “Most Cultivators will use the tree to meld it with magical items, or even absorb it into their Dao Pillars, acquiring the invincible thunder which exists within the Sieve Net Mulberry Thunder Leaf.

“However, in the Black Lands, there is a type of larva called Frigid Snow, which exists in the snowstorms of mid-winter. Of all the remarkable bugs

in the world, it is ranked number ninety-seven. It's a remarkable larva; it doesn't produce silk, but rather, Frigid Qi. It is quite prized by Cultivators, and if it can be required, is viewed as a precious treasure. It can be refined into a Frigid Spirit, embodied into a Frigid treasure.

"This larva is not common, but not exceedingly rare, and occasionally appear." At this point, Lu Tao paused for a moment and looked at Meng Hao.

Meng Hao looked back at him, and their gazes locked for a moment. Lu Tao sighed inwardly, and then continued.

"What only a few people know, however, is that there is an unusual relationship between the larva and the Sieve Net Thunder Mulberry Tree. If the larva consumes the leaves of the tree, it is possible for it to become the number four ranked remarkable bug... the Woodless Larva!

"The Woodless Larva turns into a chrysalis, and will produce a thread of silk. That thread cannot be broken, nor can the body be destroyed. The body cannot be destroyed, and the thread cannot be broken. It creates an unstoppable cycle. The thread becomes an invincible precious treasure.

"The Woodless Larva has only appeared twice throughout history, and each time, the thread it produced caused a sensation in the Cultivation world. There was even conflict in the Eastern Lands. To this very day, no one knows what caused the death of the Woodless Larvae that appeared twice before." Lu Tao sighed inwardly. Having finished speaking, he looked deeply at Meng Hao, then closed his eyes.

Meng Hao muttered to himself as he looked at closed-eyed Lu Tao. Finally, he laughed. Turning, his body transformed into a prismatic beam which shot off into the distance.

After Meng Hao left, Lu Tao opened his eyes. He looked blankly up at the sky, then let out a long sigh. Soon, his eyes filled with a cold glow.

"Everything I said now was ninety percent true and ten percent false. That guy might be smart, but he'll have a hard time telling which is which. He'll definitely go looking for the Frigid Snow Larva. If he really does feed it the Sieve Net Thunder Mulberry Leaf, then he's dead!

“All I have to do now is endure this pain a bit longer until the Black Sieve Sect finishes. Then I’ll be able to find some clues in this place to find what I’m looking for.” A grim look on his face, he took a deep breath, and then closed his eyes to begin repairing his spell.

Meng Hao was lost in thought as he flew through the air. Of course he wouldn’t believe everything that Lu Tao told him. However, he was fairly certain that at least some of what he’d said was true. It would have been too difficult to simply make up such a story on the spot. Perhaps half was true and half were lies.

“With desire, comes incompleteness. If I have no desire, then the storms will not touch me.” Meng Hao smiled as he continued onward. Everything he passed was completely barren; he didn’t see even one rogue Foundation Establishment Cultivator. Up ahead, the Hundred Spirits Tower emitted a bright glow which surrounded everything.

From such a distance, Meng Hao was unable to spot Xu Qing amongst the crowd. He silently took out the good luck charm and poured some spiritual energy into it. Immediately, he felt the teleportation power.

However, he couldn’t teleport immediately. It would require some time before the power could be activated. Meng Hao took a deep breath and then shot toward the peak of a nearby mountain. He sat down cross-legged. Ignoring what was happening around him, he continued to pour spiritual energy into the good luck charm, feeling the teleportation power growing in intensity.

“I need to wait for the time it takes half an incense stick to burn...” This was his first time using the good luck charm, so it was also his first time encountering its downside.

His current location wasn’t exactly safe, but there were no people around, only the glow emanating from the Hundred Spirits Tower. However, his Perfect Foundation was still capable of resisting it. If too much time passed, though, it would become more difficult to fight back. Therefore, he concentrated fully on the good luck charm.

“I wonder where I’ll be teleported to....” His eyes flickered as he felt the

teleportation power surging. He placed his right hand on the ground. The dirt began to churn, and tentacles burst up out of the soil. They transformed into a violet-golden fruit the size of a palm. Meng Hao closed his fingers over it and then placed it into his bag of the Cosmos.

It was at this moment that suddenly, something flickered in the air near the Hundred Spirits Tower. It wasn't large, but Meng Hao immediately recognized it. It was none other than what he and Han Bei had encountered before teleporting out of the square cauldron... the meat jelly!

It floated in mid-air, its archaic features gazing curiously at the Hundred Spirits Tower.

Suddenly, it emitted a piercing howl which filled heaven and earth. The wind and clouds surged, and the ground shook. Even the Hundred Spirits Tower trembled as if it might collapse. The hundreds of phantoms which circled around all began to shriek. Lightning began to build up on their bodies.

Surrounding the tower at its base were nearly one thousand Black Sieve Sect disciples, all sitting cross legged. In the forefront were eight Core Formation Cultivators. As soon as the meat jelly appeared and the clouds whipped into a frenzy, their eyes opened, and they looked up into the sky.

“It's appeared!!”

“That thing is Ultimate Vexation?”

Their eyes filled with excitement, and their hearts pounded as their hands flickered incantations. Immediately, the ground in front of them began to glow, and suddenly Patriarch Violet Sieve and the beautiful middle-aged woman appeared. Nascent Soul Cultivators!

“So, it was fished out!!”

“I shall acquire this item today!” cried Patriarch Violet Sieve. His eyes were fixed on the meat jelly and they shined with intense expectation.

# Chapter 166: Ultimate Vexation Bonds a Master!

“According to the ancient records, this is Ultimate Vexation,” said Patriarch Violet Sieve. “It will never bond a master, it loves thunder, and consumes lightning. However, what excites it more than anything is not lightning, but the electricity within the human body!

“The electricity contained within the Dao Pillars of hundreds of Cultivators, as well as the power of their Cultivation bases, has been combined into the Hundred Spirits Tower. This thing has never encountered such immense, intangible Qi as that which emanates from this tower!” He stared at the meat jelly, which was currently backing away slowly.

Next to Patriarch Violet Sieve, the beautiful middle-aged woman was also staring at the meat jelly. Both of them circulated their Cultivation bases. They seemed ready to spring into action at any moment.

Panting, Patriarch Violet Sieve used Divine thought to communicate with the beautiful woman: “Wait just a bit longer. This thing is fast, and if it wishes to flee, even a Sect Patriarch wouldn’t be able to capture it alive. It has incredible Qi, and if captured, may detonate itself and wait to be reincarnated. If that happens, who knows how many thousands of years will pass before it reappears....

“We must wait for it to consume the Hundred Spirits Tower. Inside is a seal, which, combined with magic cast by the three Patriarchs on the outside, will strip it of its power of self-detonation. Then, the two of us will be able to capture it alive!!”

Meng Hao’s brow furrowed as he looked at the meat jelly. In his estimation it was a very inauspicious item. Inside the cauldron, it had caused the death of several people. In the end, it had even spoken, which left Meng Hao with a very strange feeling. He really disliked the thing.

“So, that thing is what the Black Sieve Sect came into this place for.” He



was lost in thought for the space of about ten breaths. The good luck charm was almost activated and would be usable at any moment. Meng Hao's expression was calm as he observed the proceedings. In his heart, he was ready to leave at a moment's notice.

Up above, the meat jelly suddenly let out another menacing howl. The Hundred Spirits Tower trembled as if it were about to collapse. Arcs of electricity sparked off of it, as did a fatally enticing Qi that Cultivators couldn't sense, but the meat jelly could. Its nose twitched and its eyes grew wide. Patriarch Violet Sieve watched excitedly as it shot forward, approaching the Hundred Spirits Tower. Its mouth opened wide and it took a giant bite.

As it took more bites, the magical face on the meat jelly looked more and more happy. It even began to emit contented humming sounds. It swallowed bite after bite, and soon the Hundred Spirits Tower was more than half consumed. Suddenly, what remained of the tower exploded!

A boom resonated out as the tower collapsed in upon itself and then shot toward the meat jelly. The meat jelly was clearly frightened half to death. The crumbling tower transformed into an enormous chain that moved with incredible speed as it encircled the meat jelly.

The meat jelly let out a frightened screech. It quickly tried to hop backward through the air, but couldn't, as if it were being held down. At this very moment, outside the Blessed Land, next to the black door, the statue that had been carried to this place by the Black Sieve Sect began to emanate a mysterious glow. Within the dark glow were three figures sitting cross-legged in meditation atop the ragged hide, controlling it.

Within the Blessed Land, ear-splitting shrieks filled the air. Meng Hao looked at the meat jelly floating in mid-air, bound by the chain. The magical face looked panic stricken. It wanted to flee, but was held tight by the chain. As it tried to jump away, the chain stretched back behind it like a long tail.

At the same time, Patriarch Violet Sieve's eyes flashed. He took a step forward, and then his body disappeared. He reappeared next to the meat

jelly. He lifted up his hand to grab it.

Simultaneously, the beautiful women also moved, appearing on the other side of the meat jelly.

The fear on the meat jelly's magical face grew more intense, and it let out a miserable cry. Its body suddenly began to shake, and lightning crackled off of it in waves. Heaven and earth shook, and Patriarch Violet Sieve's face flickered. He retreated a pace. The beautiful woman's eyes narrowed, and she too retreated, not daring to touch the lightning.

As the two retreated, the chained meat jelly rushed forward, its face filled with helplessness and despair. With the chain restricting it, it couldn't move very fast. Behind it, Patriarch Violet Sieve's eyes gleamed, and he let out a cold harrumph.

"You can't escape," he said, his voice filling the air. "Today, the Black Sieve Sect has come for you!" He took a step forward, reaching his hand out. The beautiful woman gave a cold snort and lifted her hand up as well. In the blink of an eye, her body seemed to be surrounded by stars, which then transformed into a multicoloured beam that shot up to surround the meat jelly on all sides.

The meat jelly quivered, and flew forward. The magical face spoke, its voice archaic, like that of an old man's: "You people can't do this...."

When they heard the words, shock filled the faces of the surrounding thousand Black Sieve Sect Disciples. They had never imagined that this object would be able to speak with the voice of a human.

"So, you truly are Ultimate Vexation," said Patriarch Violet Sieve, laughing. He shot forward along with the beautiful woman. Their eyes glowed mysteriously as their bodies transformed into beams of light as which surrounded the meat jelly.

If that were all to it, it wouldn't be a big deal. But next, the eight Core Formation Cultivators among the Black Sieve Sect disciples all let out a shout. The rest of the disciples began to chant a scripture.

At the same time as scripture droned out from the mouths of the

thousand disciples, far way in the Southern Domain, tens of thousands of Black Sieve Sect Cultivators sat cross-legged, also chanting a scripture. Above the Ten Thousand Mountains of the Black Sieve Sect, an enormous vortex circulated in the air. It sucked in the scriptures chanted by the tens of thousands of Cultivators and transmitted them into the Blessed Land via the mouths of the thousand Cultivators there. The power of the scripture caused everything to shake and tremble.

A concerned look appeared on the meat jelly's magical face. "You people are immoral. You should be converting that bird, you shouldn't be trying to convert me...." Its voice sounded frightened, and it let out another shriek. Suddenly, massive amounts of bluish Qi began to emanate off of it.

Screaming miserably, the meat jelly shot forward, its expression desperate. It wanted to flee. At this moment, a massive roaring sound filled the sky. Up above, an enormous cage appeared in mid-air.

It was composed of pitch black iron bars which were inscribed with countless magical sealing symbols. It emanated a shocking pressure which caused large amounts of fissures to split the earth blow.

The cage glittered as it shot toward the meat jelly, preparing to capture it alive and lock it tight. Black Qi emanated out from the cage's bars, within which could be seen countless faces whose features were filled with excited avarice.

All of this takes a long time to describe, but actually happened in an instant. Meng Hao was not very close, yet was still shaken to the core. The good luck charm was almost ready to activate. Although everything that was happening was shocking, he didn't really care too much about it, and was mostly focused on getting away.

But... suddenly, he leaped up and began to retreat backward.

"That damned meat jelly, why is it coming toward me?" He retreated unhesitatingly, eyeing the meat jelly as it changed direction and for no apparent reason shot toward him.

Meng Hao couldn't make himself believe that the meat jelly would pass him by. Having seen the destruction left in its wake within the cauldron,

he was certain that the thing was coming directly toward him.

Meng Hao's scalp went numb. He thought about the two Nascent Soul eccentrics, about the bizarre sound of the scripture being chanted, and about the massive cage descending from above. His annoyance with the meat jelly grew more and more intense.

But he was merely a Foundation Establishment Cultivator. No matter how fast he moved, there was no way he could evade an item which was currently being chased by two Nascent Soul eccentrics and, in fact, the entire Black Sieve Sect. The meat jelly was chained, but its speed was still impossible to describe. One breath, it was off in the distance, and the next breath, it was directly in front of Meng Hao. It slowly descended onto his head.

A look of shock covered Meng Hao's face. He reached up, grabbed it, and threw it away as far as possible.

The instant it was thrown away, it hopped back toward Meng Hao, opened its mouth and then bit his arm.

"If I can't escape," it wailed, "then neither can you, you immoral fellow...."

Patriarch Violet Sieve and the beautiful woman approached in pursuit, and when they saw what was happening, their eyes went wide with intense rage.

"Doth thou dare!" raged the violet-robed Patriarch. His roar reached to the Heavens, and the entire land began to quake. His speed was incredible, and within moments, was in front of Meng Hao, a look of indescribable rage on his face. His palm descended toward Meng Hao.

Boom!

As the boom echoed out, a twinkling shield appeared around Meng Hao. It wasn't being emitted by Meng Hao, but rather the meat jelly. Furthermore, as Meng Hao retreated, it wasn't under his own power, but rather because the meat jelly was pulling him along by the arm.

It had his arm firmly gripped in its mouth, which caused blood to seep

out. Its body trembled, and was no longer translucent. Now it looked somewhat muddy.

“So disgusting, so disgusting, so disgusting.... gross, gross, gross....” it cried. Patriarch Violet Sieve and the beautiful woman stood by, their expressions mixtures of rage and disbelief.

“Bonding... it... it’s bonding a master?”

“I’ve bonded a master,” cried the meat jelly, hopping up onto Meng Hao’s head and transforming into the shape of a hat. “I bond this guy as my master. Useless! It’s useless to capture me now. You immoral people, I’ve already bonded a master! I have no more powers of flight and no more shield. I’m crippled, I’m going to die! You bunch of foolish fools, you’re too evil! I, I, I, I....” It suddenly turned its shocked attention to Meng Hao. “Hey, why haven’t you teleported away yet?”

# Chapter 167: You Know, That's Immoral...

“Are you an idiot? Ohh, I like idiots. Idiots are good. Idiots are great. Eee? 1 How come you haven't teleported away yet? Wait, are you actually an idiot? Why did that bird pick an idiot?” The meat jelly continued to chatter without stopping.

Patriarch Violet Sieve raised his head up to the sky and howled. He shot closer, lifting his hand. All the light in the area seemed to grow dim, and ripples spread out everywhere, which then began to collapse in toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao's face went pale. With a bitter smile, he looked at the glittering shield in front of him that was protecting him from Patriarch Violet Sieve. It was rapidly collapsing. Up ahead, the faces within the Black Qi emitted by the cage roared with rage. There was no time for Meng Hao to think. He pinched the good luck charm, and a roar sounded out. Pain filled his body. To everyone watching, it looked as if the moment before the protective shield broke, a black hole appeared next to Meng Hao. It swallowed him up, along with the meat jelly.

Meng Hao disappeared, along with echo of the meat jelly's voice:

“Although it actually makes me like you more, are you really an idiot? No way. There's really no way. That bird is the root of all immorality, and yet the person he selected turns out to be an idiot... idiot... idiot....”

The voice echoed out into silence. It was the only sound to be heard. Patriarch Violet Sieve stood there, his face unsightly, rage surging from his eyes. The chain fell to the ground in front of him. The meat jelly had bonded Meng Hao as its master, and had cast off the chain.

“Bonded....” panted the Patriarch. “It actually bonded a master. According the ancient records, it can't bond a master! It has never bonded a master!” He lifted his head up and roared.

The beautiful, middle-aged woman took a deep breath. After a moment, her eyes glittered. The cage disintegrated and the chain broke up into countless pieces and drifted away. The figures within the black Qi began

to fade, and the Qi itself dissipated. As it did, Patriarch Violet Sieve's heart trembled.

"A good luck charm from the Milky Way Luck Sect.... So, that person was able to leave because of that object. I will find him. I will pay any cost necessary to find him. But his Sect can't find out. Ultimate Vexation has bonded a master. That's excellent. A new variable. Perhaps Longevity Qi cannot be produced, but Longevity Pills can!!"

Meanwhile, in the Southern Domain.

Near the sphere of influence of the Blood Demon Sect was a lake. The lake was as smooth as a mirror, and emitted spiritual energy, causing the entire area to be covered with mist throughout the year. It had a very otherworldly look.

But, that was only from the perspective of mortals. Although the spiritual energy in the area wasn't bad, it was far from being close to what is was within the five great Sects. Even some smaller Sects had greater accumulations of spiritual energy.

Although this area was within the sphere of influence of the Blood Demon Sect, it was on the very edge, on the area bordering the Solitary Sword Sect's territory. Occasionally, Cultivators from the Blood Demon Sect would fly by this area. In actuality, it was a relatively dangerous place.

That was because the Blood Demon Sect and the Solitary Sword Sect had a blood feud, which was common knowledge amongst Southern Domain Cultivators. Although no major conflicts had broken out, small fights would occasionally occur.

Many areas surrounding the lake were actually battlefields for the Solitary Sword Sect and the Blood Demon Sect.

Next to the lake was a mountain village, which was inhabited by a Clan by the name of Xiao. The most powerful member of the Clan was of the mid Foundation Establishment stage. Seven or eight Clan members were at the Qi Condensation stage, and the rest didn't have any latent talent whatsoever. Years ago, the Clan Lord had been a disciple of the Blood Demon Sect. However, he was growing old, and had been injured. His

Cultivation base could make no further progress, and his longevity was running out.

In most cases, disciples like this are asked to leave the Blood Demon Sect and found Clans in the surrounding areas. Their heirs will then have the chance to enter the Blood Demon Sect.

Generally speaking, even if the Solitary Sword Sect came into the region, they would ignore such people. As a result, the Xiao Clan's territory had been relatively peaceful in recent years.

However, that peace was mostly because no large Sect had made any attempt to bully them; often there would be friction with surrounding Cultivator Clans.

This was especially true because of the position they occupied next to the Spirit lake. Many surrounding Cultivator Clans coveted the lake, and glared at it like a tiger eyeing its prey. Were it not for the Cultivation base of the Xiao Clan Lord, their clan would definitely have been carved up like a melon.

Unfortunately, Xiao Clan Lord Xiao Chang'en's 2 longevity was reaching its end, and his body was beginning to deteriorate. A crisis was forming. Today, members of the Xu Clan had arrived with ill intentions. They strolled through the Xiao Clan, cold smiles covering their faces.

"Fellow Daoist Chang'en," said the Xu Clan Lord Xu Luodi 3 with a false smile and a sinister voice, "you should carefully consider my proposal. If we form a marriage alliance, then we can share this lake. That will ensure that the names of Xu and Xiao will exist forever. The day when our Clans can re-enter the Blood Demon Sect will be just around the corner." Behind him trailed ten or more Clan members with Cultivation bases at the Qi Condensation stage. The most conspicuous among them was at the eighth level of Qi Condensation. He was currently casting smiles toward one of the members of the Xiao Clan, was a tall, slim young woman with a scowl on her face.

The girl wore a long green robe. Wind from the lake lifted her silky hair. She had beautiful features and skin like jade. Her intelligent eyes were like



those of a red phoenix, tilted upward gently. She was truly a rare beauty.

Xiao Chang'en stood next to her, looking somewhat sickly. The flame of his life force was growing dim. Behind him were the seven or eight Qi Condensation Clan members. He glanced at the people from the Xu Clan, and opened his mouth to speak, but then trembled and began to cough. The young woman reached out to support him, a worried look on her face.

Xiao Chang'en took a deep breath and then said, "Xu Luodi, you can have the lake, but as for a marriage alliance, that's impossible." He patted the hand of the woman who stood next to him, and then glanced at the people from the Xu Clan. He was clearly weak, but his look could chop nails and slice iron.

"The Xu Clan wants this lake," said Xu Luodi. "As for the Xiao Clan's talisman expert girl, we want her too. If you agree, excellent. But if you disagree...." A smile covered his face, and yet his eyes glowed with killing intent. He took a step forward.

As his foot descended, a wave of mid Foundation Establishment pressure emanated out, filling the area. The faces of the Xiao Clan Qi Condensation Cultivators went pale and filled with nervousness and uncertainty. Ripples spread out across the surface of the lake.

At this exact same time, however, the sky above, which had previously been filled with blazing sunlight, suddenly seemed to grow dark.

It went back to normal in an instant. It happened so fast that if you blinked, you might not even notice.

However, the faces of both the Xu and Xiao Clan flashed, and they all gasped. A look of disbelief appeared on Xu Luodi's face, and as for Xiao Chang'en his heart was currently filled with the flames of fury, and yet all he could do was gape in astonishment. All of the Clan members present were currently staring toward the lake.

A gigantic black hole had appeared above the lake, sending the lake waters roiling. A person appeared from within the black hole, emerging along with massive amounts of black Qi. He coughed up a mouthful of blood. A noisy voice could suddenly be heard.

“I’m not finished. Are you really an idiot... idiot... idiot?”

Face pale, Meng Hao emerged and glanced around. His gaze landed upon the Cultivators from the Xu and Xiao Clans. As the black hole disappeared behind him, Xiao Chang’en stopped panting and collected himself. A strange light gleamed in his eye. The woman next to him was about to open her mouth, but Xiao Chang’en lightly covered it with his hand.

He did this because he was the owner of the lake. Xu Luodi wasn’t the only person who had come here recently with ill intentions and a desire to take a superior position. The current situation caused Xiao Chang’en’s heart to be filled with anxiety. His eyes immediately began to shine with a stern aura. A cold smile appeared on his face.

At first, he had been nervous, but after checking Meng Hao’s Cultivation base, he let out a light sigh. He was still a bit suspicious, though, considering the strange nature of Meng Hao’s arrival.

“Fellow Daoist, who are you, and why have you intruded upon this Spirit lake land?” These words were uttered not by Xiao Chang’en, but by Xu Luodi. From what he could see, Meng Hao was at early Foundation Establishment. Considering how tenuous the situation the moment, he couldn’t be certain that this person wasn’t here to assist Xiao Chang’en.

As he spoke, the seven or eight members of the younger generation of his clan started to get nervous and stare at Meng Hao.

“Sir, some problems occurred with my teleportation and I inadvertently appeared here.” Meng Hao’s body flickered, and he landed on the shore of the lake. When he did, Xiao Chang’en pulled the woman back with him a few steps, away from Xu Luodi. His fellow Clansmen followed suit. He said nothing, but an enthusiastic look had suddenly appeared in his eyes.

When Xu Luodi saw this, he frowned. As Meng Hao stepped foot onto the shore, Xu Luodi suddenly strode forward, the power of his mid Foundation Establishment Cultivation base flaring into power. A hypocritical smile filled his face as the pressure radiated out.

The hat on Meng Hao’s head suddenly began speaking to him.

“You know, that’s wrong. That’s very immoral. You shouldn’t tell lies. You obviously came here because you were fleeing for your life. You did have a reason to come here. You came here on purpose!”

Meng Hao’s face grew dark and Xu Luodi stared in shock. Xiao Chang’en’s eyes narrowed, although his expression went back to normal in an instant. The woman next to him looked in wide-eyed astonishment at the hat on Meng Hao’s head.

Meng Hao frowned, then took the hat off his head, crumpled it into a ball, and threw it away as hard as he could.

“Fellow Daoist,” he said, ignoring the hat, “where am I? What is the nearest Sect?” He glanced at Xu Luodi’s rippling Cultivation base and vigilant expression, and then looked at Xiao Chang’en.

“Fellow Daoist there’s no need to ask when you already know the answer. Why did you....” Xiao Chang’en was starting to get a strange feeling about the situation. But before he could finish speaking, he suddenly noticed that the hat which had just been crumpled and thrown away, suddenly restored its shape, and was back on Meng Hao’s head.

A quick word about “Eee?” This is a sound made in Chinese to express surprise or amazement. I hear it all the time, and it literally sounds like you are saying the letter E in a questioning tone. I could have translated it as “oh” or “ah” or something, but I think this transliteration more accurately captures the feeling of this uniquely Chinese sound. In Chinese it’s 咦 yí. ←

Xiao Chang’en’s name in Chinese is 肖长恩 xiào cháng ēn – Xiao is a family name. Chang means “long.” En means “favor” or “kindness” ←

Xu Luodi’s name in Chinese is 徐洛堤 xú luò dī – Xu is a common family name. Luo has no particular meaning. Di means “dyke” or “embankment” ←

# Chapter 168: The Xiao Clan Gifts the Lake

“You know, that’s wrong. That’s immoral. You can’t just throw things onto the ground. What if you hit a little kid? That would be a sin. Even if you didn’t hit a little kid, you might hit one of the fish in the lake, or maybe some shrimp. That would also be wrong. Listen. You should carefully take me off. You should....” The hat continued to talk non-stop with its preaching.

Meng Hao frowned, and Xu Luodi stared in amazement. His surrounding Clansmen looked at Meng Hao’s hat in disbelief. After a moment, Xu Luodi’s face grew grim. He was getting the feeling that this early Foundation Establishment Cultivator was doing this on purpose.

“Enough!” said Xu Luodi. “This isn’t a place where you can just come and go as you please. If you won’t tell the truth, then I’ll just grab you and force the truth out of you.” He couldn’t figure out whether or not this guy was here to help the Xiao Clan or not, but at the moment, Meng Hao was being very annoying. More importantly, Meng Hao’s Cultivation base was only at the early Foundation Establishment stage. He would be able to determine his purpose in coming here after capturing him.

Before he even finished speaking, Xu Luodi walked forward. He lifted his right hand, and a dark red glow appeared, which coalesced into a red whip. The whip emitted cracking sounds as it screamed through the air and flicked back and forth. At the very end of the whip, a ferocious, fork-tongued snake head appeared. It shot directly toward Meng Hao.

As Xu Luodi made his move, the members of the Xu Clan behind him all looked incredibly excited. Whenever the Clan Lord attacked, he achieved victory; that was what they had seen in their experience. They couldn’t wait to see their Clan Lord mop the floor with an early Foundation Establishment Cultivator.

Meng Hao gave Xu Luodi a cool look. During his time protecting Xu Qing in the Black Sieve Sect’s Blessed Land, he had encountered many such Cultivators. He lifted his hand, which was holding a dark reddish

fruit. He threw it toward the ground.

As soon as the fruit hit the ground, it burrowed down. Instantly, the ground began to shake. Even as the dark red whip neared Meng Hao, a boom filled the air. The ground in front of Meng Hao erupted as a mass of dark red vines shot out. They rose a dozen or more meters into the air, emanating rippling power that matched that of the mid Foundation Establishment stage. The instant they appeared, they shot toward the whip.

An explosion resonated out. The whip couldn't withstand even one blow, and it collapsed into pieces. The ferocious vines opened their wide mouths and shot toward Xu Luodi.

His face fell, and the Clan members behind him looked on in disbelief, even more astonished than him. He cried out in alarm as he saw the more than ten vines approaching. His eyes narrowed, and he suddenly pressed down on the pit of his stomach. He spat up a large mouthful of blood, which then transformed into a mist. The mist coalesced into a blood-colored head, which then slammed into the vines.

An explosion echoed out, and the blood drained from Xu Luodi's face. He staggered back several paces into his pale-faced Clansmen, who all coughed up mouthfuls of blood.

"A Shaman Cultivator!" gasped Xu Luodi, retreating backward again.

He wasn't the only one to have such a reaction. Xiao Chang'en's eyes suddenly went wide. The faces of the surrounded Xiao Clan members flickered. The young woman next to Xiao Chang'en began to breathe rapidly.

"Even if you're a Shaman Cultivator, your Spirit minion is only at the mid Foundation Establishment stage...." His eyes filled with killing intent. He was deeply aware that when dealing with Shaman Cultivators, the most important thing was their Spirit minion. Such Cultivators had weak bodies, and they feared decapitation. However, before he was able to complete his sentence, he stopped speaking, as if something had clamped down on his jaw.

Up ahead of him, more earth showered up as another vine appeared. This vine was violet-colored, and twice as thick as the other vines. The instant it appeared, it emanated the power of the late Foundation Establishment stage.

The vine wasn't originally like this; however, because Meng Hao had branded it with his blood, it had mutated, and now had a trunk which had the strength of late Foundation Establishment.

"Screw off!" said Meng Hao coolly. His expression didn't change, and in fact, he wasn't worried inwardly either. He had just escaped from the hands of Nascent Soul Cultivators in the Blessed land, so as far as he was concerned, even late Foundation Establishment stage Cultivators were too trivial to mention.

Hearing his words, Xiao Chang'en's face flickered, and he felt anxiety. He had been about to speak, but seeing Meng Hao's smirk made him temporarily speechless.

Xu Luodi's expression flickered, and then he spun around. With the flick of a sleeve, he shot off into the distance with his Clansmen. His eyes were filled with venomous hatred. The object of his resentment, however, was not really Meng Hao, but the Xiao Clan. He was now convinced that Meng Hao had been called by the Xiao Clan to provide assistance.

Meng Hao watched with the same expression as ever as Xu Luodi left. He didn't call back the vines, either. He looked at Xiao Chang'en with the same smirk as before.

"Fellow Daoist," said Xiao Chang'en, "many thanks for your assistance. I, Xiao, was also pushed into a corner. Please accept my apology for causing you any trouble...." He clasped hands and bowed deeply to Meng Hao.

Honest people don't need to speak with hidden words. Xiao Chang'en spoke very directly, causing a smile to break out on Meng Hao's face. Even though he wasn't sure of all the details of the situation he had stepped into, he had picked up on some clues, especially the excitement that had appeared earlier on Xiao Chang'en's face. Meng Hao could see clearly that he had been used to put some pressure on the Xu Clan.

That was why he hadn't killed anyone, but rather let Xu Luodi escape. This caused Xiao Chang'en to hesitate. Xu Luodi had left in a rage, angry not at Meng Hao, but at the Xiao Clan.

Even though he was being used, he helped. He fixed the problem for the moment, but sooner or later, the Xu Clan would return. If Meng Hao was gone at that time, then Xiao Chang'en would have to pay the price. That price wouldn't merely be a daughter and a lake.

Xiao Chang'en laughed bitterly, and then bowed again to Meng Hao. Next to him, the young woman was silent, then seemed to come to a realization. She joined Xiao Chang'en in bowing toward Meng Hao.

"Many thanks, benefactor," she said, her voice crisp and melodious.

At the moment, everything was quiet, except for the voice of the hat on Meng Hao's head. "... and then you should lightly pick me up. You mustn't trample me underfoot." Actually, the voice hadn't stopped speaking this entire time. The word poured out in a steady flow.

Meng Hao frowned.

"Fellow Daoist, please forgive me," said Xiao Chang'en. "I don't care if the Xu Clan covets my Spirit lake, or even if they bully me because of my declining longevity. But they want to swallow up my entire Clan. Ai...." A bitter look appeared on his face. Suddenly he began to cough violently. The young woman stepped forward, her face covered with anxiety.

Meng Hao looked at Xiao Chang'en, and the thick Death Qi which emanated from him.

"What is this place?" he asked coolly.

"Sir," said the young woman, "we are on the border between the Blood Demon Sect and the Solitary Sword Sect." Her voice was light, but her expression filled with nervousness as she looked at Meng Hao.

Having heard this, Meng Hao slapped his bag of holding and retrieved a jade slip. He examined it for a moment, confirming his position with a frown. Xiao Chang'en continued to eye him and the ferocious vines that surrounded him. He gritted his teeth.

“Fellow Daoist,” he said, “I would like to give you this Spirit lake as a gift!” All of the Xiao Clan members, except for the young woman, stared in shock.

Meng Hao lifted his head and looked at Xiao Chang'en. He didn't express any opinion whatsoever, nor did he speak.

“I myself used to be a disciple of the Blood Demon Sect,” said Xiao Chang'en. “But I was injured, barely escaping with my life. My Cultivation base is incapable of advancement, and my longevity cannot be increased. I'm afraid I only have a few years of life left.

“This Spirit lake was passed down to me from a member of the senior generation before he died. It's become the only way to grow the Xiao Clan. However, more and more people have been casting eyes upon it lately. I'm not sure how to keep it within the Clan. The Spiritual energy in the lake might not seem very abundant, but it's actually very beneficial for Spirit minions. Doing breathing exercises in this area is very good for them.

“Fellow Daoist, please accept the lake.” His words were sincere. Although his heart was filled with bitterness, he couldn't think of any other option than this. His relationship with the Blood Demon Sect had been severed, and he couldn't participate in any of the struggles and fighting that went on amongst the Clans founded by former Blood Demon Sect disciples.

His only option was this early Foundation Establishment Cultivator in front of him, who happened to have a Spirit minion at the late Foundation Establishment stage.

“Furthermore,” continued Xiao Chang'en, “there has been friction lately between the Blood Demon Sect and the Solitary Sword Sect. Occasionally great battles erupt, but this place isn't a battlefield, and with the exception of occasional disturbances from other local Clans, no one pays much attention to it....” He chose his words carefully as he tried to persuade Meng Hao to stay. Meng Hao smiled, and his eyes glittered.

Although it wasn't really what he had wanted, he ended up with the object the Black Sieve Sect had been seeking in the Blessed Land. He had



no doubt aroused the ire of the Sect, and though they wouldn't announce it publicly, they would no doubt be searching for him.

"I wonder if Elder Sister Xu will be implicated..." he thought to himself. "I don't think that's very likely." Right now, his highest priority was to improve his Cultivation base. He needed to form his fourth Dao Pillar. That, coupled with his Perfect Foundation, would enable him to stand toe-to-toe with Dao Children from the five Sects and three Clans.

At that time, he would be above any Chosen, and would actually be in the top ten most powerful people in the Foundation Establishment stage in the Southern Domain. After he formed six Dao Pillars, he was confident that he could destroy any of the so-called Dao Children.

"Unfortunately, now that I have a Perfect Foundation, I have no way to absorb the spiritual power of heaven and earth. Even if I could find a way to force the absorption process, it would still be just too difficult.... The only thing I can do is use medicinal pills. But that won't work for long." Meng Hao sighed inwardly. A Perfect Foundation was strong, but had its setbacks. That having been said, if he had to make his choice again, he would still chose the Perfect Foundation.

"What if I can reach late Foundation Establishment..." he thought, his eyes shining with a barely detectable glow. He looked at Xiao Chang'en for a long moment, and then nodded.

"We can talk about the lake later," said Meng Hao coolly. "I'll stay here for a few days in secluded meditation. Please don't disturb me. Furthermore, please bring me all of the Spirit Stones you have in your clan.

Xiao Chang'en spirits seemed to lift at first, and then a bitter smile covered his face. He gritted his teeth and nodded in agreement.

# Chapter 169: Heavens, You Really Don't Know?

Meanwhile, outside the Xiao Clan mountain village, Xu Luodi flew along grim faced, surrounded by his fellow Clan Members. He glanced back, his eyes filled with venomous anger.

“Xiao Chang'en, if you can recruit help from outside, then so can I! Trifling Shaman Cultivator. If you take his powerful Spirit minion out of the equation then I could slaughter him easily. With those type of Cultivators, the only main thing to worry about is their Spirit minion. I'll behead him in an instant!” He let out a cold snort, and then eyed his fellow Clansmen. “You head back without me. This matter isn't finished!”

The Xu Clansmen dispersed. Xu Luodi flicked his sleeve, transforming into a colorful beam that shot off into the distance.

“The only thing I can do is to go ask help from Mr. Sang Luo. He's at the late Foundation Establishment stage, with seven Dao Pillars. He can easily take care of the Shaman Cultivator. The only problem is that he has a very eccentric personality, and might not agree to help.... But considering the price paid for that matter a few years ago, he'll surely agree. It will all be worth it if I can get that Spirit lake!” His mind made up, Xu Luodi sped up.

He flew for about a day before arriving at the foot of a lonely mountain. A few vultures circled about overhead. Up ahead was a pile of wood about six meters tall. On top was a corpse.

The corpse had clearly been rotting there for several months. The sight of it was quite horrifying. A few vultures were perched on top of the wood pile, picking at it. They glanced at Xu Luodi, their eyes shining mysteriously. They clearly weren't afraid of the living.

“Xu Luodi requests an audience with Mr. Sang Luo,” he said, eying the corpse, his heart thumping. The skeleton was clearly completely lifeless. However, he recognized the remains as belonging to a local Clan Lord whose Cultivation base had been at the late Foundation Establishment

stage.

His words rang out into the lonely mountain. After some time passed, a raspy voice drifted out.

“This fellow looked down on me a few months ago, so I grabbed him and brought him here. I tied him up as punishment, but never imagined he would be so weak. He died after only two months. You, what matter brought you here today!?”

Xu Luodi took a long breath as he gave a deep bow toward the lonely mountain.

“Sir, I’ve encountered some trouble. I would like to ask for Mr. Sang Luo’s assistance to kill someone.” He spoke directly, knowing that Mr. Sang Luo didn’t like long-winded explanations.

“Kill someone.... Wahahahahaha!” A peal of ear-piercing laughter rang out. “Because of the friendship we developed that year, I can help you. But there are some requirements. A lot of requirements, actually.”

“I understand,” said Xu Luodi, lifting up a bag of holding. He tossed it out, and before it could hit the ground, it spun off into the distance, snatched up by some invisible force.

“Wait for me a few days,” said the raspy voice. “After I finish refining this guy’s bones, then I’ll go with you.” Suddenly, the vultures picked up the corpse and flew off with it into the lonely mountain.

Xu Luodi took another deep breath, his eyes glowing brightly.

“Xiao Chang’en, let’s see how you fight back this time!” His eyes filled with killing intent, Xu Luodi sat down cross-legged to meditate.

Meanwhile, back in the Xiao Clan mountain village, Meng Hao also sat cross-legged, in a small room near the lake. A soft glow surrounded him that allowed him to see out of the room, but prevented anyone on the outside from seeing inside.

The glow was being cast by nine paper talismans. The talismans had been painted by the young Xiao Clan woman and then personally

delivered to Meng Hao. After setting up the talismans, she had departed with a respectful bow.

After she left, Meng Hao spat out the lightning mist, which spread out to cover the area. Finally, he could open his bag of holding without anxiety. He pulled out the Sieve Earth Pill he'd acquired from the Black Sieve Sect, and examined it closely.

As he looked over the pill, the meat jelly hat on his head began to talk. "Hey, where did I leave off just now? Right, let's continue the matter from yesterday. You can't do that. It's immoral! You can't just throw me down onto the ground. That's too excessive!"

Meng Hao didn't respond. The meat jelly hadn't stopped talking at all. It seemed it could speak on a single subject for an entire day. It would be one thing if it didn't repeat itself, but it did, and never seemed to get bored, either.

"What would happen if you hit a little kid....?"

"It's also bad for the grass and plants...."

"The little fish and other creatures are all innocent...."

It felt like a buzz in Meng Hao's ears. He tried to ignore it, but the meat jelly hat's voice seemed to be growing louder. Eventually, it was shouting, its voice so loud that it drifted past the lightning mist shield to the outside. When they heard the voice, the Xiao Clan members all exchanged glances.

"SHUT UP!!" Grinding his teeth, Meng Hao grabbed the hat and threw it onto the ground.

"Eee? I wasn't finished. Where did I leave off? Oh well, let me change topics. You can't do that. It's immoral...." Meng Hao lifted his head up toward the sky, his expression more and more unsightly. After a moment, he stood up and began to trample on the hat.

The old man's pedantic face suddenly appeared. Even though Meng Hao was fiercely trampling it, it didn't let out any miserable cries. Instead, it seemed to speak even more earnestly. "You can't do that, it's too cruel! It's too immoral!"

“What do you want?” said Meng Hao, taking a few steps back and clenching his jaw. “You escaped, why are you following me? Go away. Go!”

“Eee? I’ve bonded you as my master. Bonding a master means bonding for life. I would never, ever be so immoral as to leave. I would never do something so lacking in principle, so lacking in....” Meng Hao slowly lifted his head up and stared blankly into the air. Enough time passed for two incense sticks to burn, and he finally looked back at the hat.

“...so lacking in character. I just told you seven hundred and forty-five things that I lack. Do you see how civilized I am? How sincere? In a word, I would never leave you.”

Meng Hao didn’t say anything. He suddenly lifted his hand and summoned a Flame Dragon, which slammed into the hat. This time, a miserable cry rang out, only to be quickly replaced by endless chatter. The hat was undamaged. As Meng Hao stared at it, veins popped out on his forehead. He had always thought of himself as good-tempered, but as of now his temper was exploding. He jumped up and down a few more times on the hat, trampling it.

But... a few moments later he stopped. Continuing to gush words, the hat returned to Meng Hao’s head. This time, however, it changed colors. Now it was green, and its appearance was a bit more exaggerated than before.

Meng Hao’s face turned dark.

“Look, child, don’t struggle. I’m a good person. I’m trying to help you. You’re on the path of wickedness, but I’m willing to use my own power to help you. Child, perhaps you are unaware of how many young people take a wrong step in life, and then regret it for an eternity. I’ll help you cast off the bitterness. I’ll help you free yourself from that damned bird. I failed in my last life, and the life before that, and the life before that, too. That damned, despicable bird is the only bird I’ve never converted!” The hat seemed to be grinding its teeth now. “In this life, I will convert it!”

“Who is this bird you keep talking about?!” said Meng Hao, his face grim. A strange feeling had risen up inside of him. This hat couldn’t be

killed and couldn't be thrown away. It really was extremely annoying.

"You don't know?" asked the hat, suddenly flying off of Meng Hao's head. Its shape suddenly rippled back into the meat jelly. The archaic face appeared, and it looked disbelieving as it gazed at Meng Hao. "Heavens, you really don't know who that damned, mass-murdering, shameless...." The meat jelly began to quiver as it let off streams of curses. Meng Hao let out a long sigh and looked up into the air. After the time it takes an incense stick to burn, he finally looked back at the meat jelly.

The meat jelly was finally concluding its description: "...should be thrown into a cesspool, damned bird? You really don't know who it is?"

Meng Hao glared at the meat jelly for a long moment before slowly saying, "I don't know."

"You really don't know?" asked the meat jelly, shocked. "You really, really don't now? Impossible! You really, really, really don't know?"

"I. Don't. Know!" Meng Hao clenched his teeth. It was really frustrating trying to communicate with this meat jelly.

"Heavens! You have its Qi on your body, but you don't know. How is this possible? How can you not know? Heavens, heavens. You really, really, really don't know?" Its eyes widened and filled with a look of complete disbelief.

Meng Hao didn't know what to say. He closed his eyes and sat down to meditate. With a bang, the meat jelly transformed back into a bright green hat and flew back onto Meng Hao's head.

Considering that Meng Hao was wearing scholars' robes, the hat was extremely conspicuous. Anyone who caught sight of it would surely do a double take.

Time passed for an incense stick to burn.

"But, how can you not know?"

Two incense sticks.

"... Inconceivable! You actually don't know...."

Two hours.

“Why aren’t you saying anything? Oh, I understand. You’re ashamed. Look, it’s okay. I’m a good person. I will do everything I can to bring you back from the path of wickedness. I...”

Meng Hao’s face grew more and more unsightly. He really had reached his breaking point. His temper exploded. He roared, grabbing the hat and throwing it outside. He slapped his bag of holding, and nearly a hundred flying swords appeared and shot toward the hat. Meng Hao’s hand flickered with incantations, and the Flame Dragon and Wind Blade appeared.

A boom rattled out in all directions, striking fear into the hearts of all the Xiao clan members. Xiao Chang’en’s eyes went wide. Even though he couldn’t see what was happening, the explosion itself was astonishing.

The young woman looked dazed, and then a strange expression appeared on her face.

Meng Hao ground his teeth, stalking forward, slashing his finger and covering it with blood. In a twinkling, the Blood Finger had appeared. His other hand flashed with the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex.

Massive explosions filled heaven and earth. A moment later, the ripples died down. Meng Hao’s entire body exuded bitterness as he stared at the meat jelly, which skipping and hopping about energetically.

“It’s so strange. You really don’t know. How is it possible? You really don’t know!”

If you’re unfamiliar with what green hats mean in Chinese culture, check out this article ↩

<http://windhorsetour.com/blog/cultural-cues-dont-wear-green-hat>

# Chapter 170: Lonely Sang Luo

Meng Hao was filled with regret. He should never have asked that question. He'd had no clue the meat jelly would talk on and on at such length. He took a deep breath, but before he could speak, the meat jelly's expression brightened.

"Oh, I know. You haven't reached Core Formation, so it can't come out. Hahaha! It can't come out...."

Meng Hao lowered his head, filled with helplessness. He looked at the meat jelly with a bitter smile.

He ground his teeth for a long moment before saying, "If you don't shut up, I'm going to take you back to the Black Sieve Sect!" He really just wanted to give voice to the frustration caused by the constant droning in his ears.

"That's okay. In any case, I've bonded a master, so it would be useless. Refining me would require refining you. Eee?" A dumbfounded look filled the meat jelly's face. It thought for a moment. "That's a good idea! I wonder what it would feel like if we got refined together. Let me think." A look of anticipation covered its face, causing Meng Hao too seem even more hopeless.

"How exactly can I get you to leave?" he said with a bitter laugh. His voice was softer this time.

Hearing this, the meat jelly instantly looked much more serious than before. Its voice solemn, it began to speak. Meng Hao ignored it, looking up into the air for the time it takes an incense stick to burn.

"... in short, I will definitely never leave you! I need to convert that bird. Until I convert it, I'll never leave!"

Meng Hao had always thought of himself as very focused. Once he set his mind to something, he couldn't be distracted. But now, he realized, that was before he had met the meat jelly.

Be it he himself, or some other consummate expert, anyone who met



this garrulous, long-winded thing would surely be driven crazy.... Meng Hao took a deep breath. He now had a much better understanding of the thing's personality. It must not be given a conversation topic! He lowered his head, and after about an hour had reached a state in which he could somewhat ignore the chattering in his ear. Despite the meat jelly's constant talking, Meng Hao took out the Sieve Earth Pill and began to examine it.

An earnest expression filled his face, but it was very hard to ignore the endless rambling. That was especially true when the meat jelly flew off of his head and landed in front of him. It seemed that it felt humiliated to be ignored.

"You can't do that. It's immoral!!" it cried, launching into another tirade.

Soon, night approached, and Meng Hao's face was covered with exhaustion. Buzzing filled his ears, and his eyes were bloodshot as he completely ignored the meat jelly. It was with despair that he had discovered that even if it wasn't given a conversation topic, the meat jelly would still continue to talk.

Until dawn. Until the next night. The moon hung brightly in the sky.

And then, finally, it seemed as the meat jelly had run out of things to talk about it. Meng Hao let out a sigh, and as he did, the meat jelly flew out to the lake shore and... began to talk to the fish within the lake....

Meng Hao let out another sigh of relief. He pulled out the copper mirror and the Spirit Stones given to him by the Xiao clan. He placed the Sieve Earth Pill onto the mirror and duplicated a single one. He thought for a moment, and then produced a jade slip. He branded it with Spiritual Sense, then flicked it out the window. Moments later, the young Xiao Clan woman approached nervously, leading a Spirit monkey with her.

The monkey screeched as it approached. The young woman looked off toward the lake shore for a moment, at the meat jelly hat, which was currently shouting out toward the lake.

"Xiao Caifeng 1 greets the elder generation," she said, pulling her gaze from the meat jelly back to Meng Hao and the lightning mist which

surrounded him. She bowed in greeting, and then proffered the leash which bound the Spirit monkey. Meng Hao's eyes opened. Without a word, he sent an Earth Sieve Pill flying toward the monkey. The monkey consumed it instantly.

It let out a few screeches, and its eyes rolled about. Meng Hao's eyes glittered as he observed, probing the monkey with his Spiritual Sense. Suddenly, the moonlight in the sky seemed to form threads which the monkey began to absorb. A contended look slowly filled the monkey's eyes.

About four hours passed in which Meng Hao observed the monkey, and Xiao Caifeng stood patiently off to the side.

Finally, Meng Hao nodded.

"Very good," he said coolly. Xiao Caifeng let out a sigh of relief. Clapping hands and bowing to Meng Hao, she led the monkey away. It was obviously much more powerful than it had been before.

Meng Hao lowered his head thoughtfully. Using the Spirit Stones provided by the Xiao Clan, he began to duplicate the pill. The pill's full name was Moon Sieve Mother Earth Pill, and could only be consumed at night. It used the moonlight as nourishment, and provided excellent results.

The cost to duplicate the pill was considerable, and the Xiao Clan was by no means a great Clan. They had not been able to provide many Spirit Stones, and soon, Meng Hao had already used half of them. The result was six duplicated Sieve Earth Pills.

"I wasted one pill, but caution required that." Dawn broke, and Meng Hao looked down at the six Sieve Earth Pills. He closed his eyes in thought, wondering how many of these pills it would take to develop his fourth Dao Pillar. Now that he had completed the circle of three Dao Pillars, it shouldn't be long before his fourth Perfect Dao Pillar started to become visible.

Time passed by slowly, and soon it was afternoon. The meat jelly was still at the lake shore, chatting with the lake waters. With his Spiritual

Sense, Meng Hao was able to determine that all the fish had retreated to the bottom of the lake to hide. There was only one left, which was slamming its head against the shore, seemingly unable to take any more torment.

Fear lingering in his heart, Meng Hao collected up the remaining Spirit Stones. He was very much afraid of attracting the attention of the meat jelly and its excited ramblings. The last thing he needed was for it to come up with a new topic to talk to him about.

He retracted his Spiritual Sense, and then suddenly, his expression flickered. He looked past the lightning mist at the world outside.

At this moment, two colorful beams of light appeared in the sky above the Xiao Clan mountain village, then shot down screaming toward the village. In the lead was a Cultivator wearing a black robe. He was very short, a midget in fact. His long robe covered his face and trailed behind him through the air. At first glance, you wouldn't notice that there was a midget inside; you would only see a black robe flying through the air.

Behind the midget was grim-faced Xu Luodi, whose eyes radiated killing intent. Of course, the midget was none other than Mr. Sang Luo, from whom Xu Luodi had requested help.

The two of them were moving incredibly fast, and within moments had landed in the the Xiao Clan mountain village. The midget spoke with a cruel, piercing voice that rolled out like thunder, covering the Xiao Clan. Xiao Caifeng's face went pale, and Xiao Chang'en's pupils constricted, and his eyes filled with fear.

Before anyone could emerge, a roaring boom filled the air, and the Xiao Clan shook as its protective shield was smashed to pieces. The Xiao Clan main gate, just outside of the lake, immediately crumbled into dust. A gale force wind swept across the entire area.

The Xiao Clan's manor houses shook, and some collapsed. The Xiao Clan members who couldn't practice Cultivation trembled when they heard the voice. Pale faced, Xiao Chang'en quickly led a group of people out. Xiao Chang'en's face filled with astonishment when he saw the

collapsed main gate, and the midget striding forward, his black robe trailing behind him. Xiao Chang'en staggered backward.

"So, it's this savage... Could it be that doomsday has arrived for the Xiao Clan...." Because of the midget's presence, he wasn't able to summon even the least bit of fighting spirit.

Mr. Sang Luo 2 was quite famous in the region. Although he didn't dare to rile the Blood Demon Sect, there was no one among the surrounding Cultivator Clans who dared to provoke him.

His Cultivation base was extremely high, at the late Foundation Establishment stage, in fact. It wouldn't be long before he could step into the False Core stage. He was savage and cruel, and if even one word was spoken to him in the wrong way, he would attack with vicious cruelty. He really had earned a fearful reputation.

Based on that alone, he might not necessarily be in such a good position. After all, the Cultivator Clans in this area were all filled with people who had connections to the Blood Demon Sect.

However... this Sang Luo had once been a disciple of the current generation of the Blood Demon Sect. However, he had broken some Sect Rules, and was thus expelled. His Cultivation base had been left intact, and he had not been prevented from causing trouble outside. Xiao Chang'en had even heard that he had an older brother who wasn't a midget, and had extraordinary latent talent. Apparently, he was a Chosen of the Blood Demon Sect.

"I, Xiao Chang'en, extend greetings to Mr. Sang Luo," said Xiao Chang'en, his face pale white as he watched Mr. Sang Luo approach, Xu Luodi at his side, radiating murder. Xu Luodi had a pleased expression in his eyes, causing Xiao Chang'en to sigh inwardly. He didn't place much hope in Meng Hao now. Meng Hao's Spirit minion was powerful, but his Cultivation base was simply too weak.

Sang Luo let out a piercing snort as he approached the Xiao Clan with Xu Luodi. His eyes gazed about from within the robe.

"Xiao Chang'en," said Xu Luodi, "Call out that Shaman Cultivator you

invited!” He laughed coldly. “Are you scared to show your face, Shaman boy? Get the hell out here!” His voice thundered out, causing Xiao Chang’en to stand there bitterly, not daring to say even a word. Behind him, his Clansmen trembled. Only Xiao Caifeng stood there motionless, face pale but eyes filled with fury.

Sang Luo stood there, enjoying the looks of fear in the eyes of the Xiao Clan members. He also reveled in Xu Luodi’s words. He couldn’t help but sigh inwardly. To him, life was as desolate as snow. It was lonely at the top, and in his heart was the desire to find someone who could defeat him.

What he didn’t know was that as soon as Xu Luodi’s voice passed through the lightning mist, Meng Hao stood up.

Meng Hao also heard the meat jelly, and it seemed as if it was preparing to conclude its speech. In his estimation, it wouldn’t be long before it returned to pester him.

“I really need to find someone to help free me from this torment,” he thought. “I’m really in agony!” Gritting his teeth, he strode out.

The air around the lake rippled as a mist of thunder rolled out. Meng Hao looked somewhat bitter as he walked forward. Beneath him, the ground heaved as the vines shot up to sway back and forth and emit piercing shrieks.

Meng Hao’s eyes were bloodshot, thanks to the torment of the meat jelly. He looked at Xu Luodi, and then the midget. He decided to target the late Foundation Establishment stage, in hopes that the battle might last a bit longer.

“Trifling early Foundation Establishment stage,” said Sang Luo coolly as he eyed Meng Hao approaching. “Xu Luodi, you’re equally as hopeless.” His eyes peered out of his robe, filled with pride and aloofness. Again, his heart filled with the powerful loneliness of snow.

“Mr. Sang Luo, sir, you really can’t blame me,” said Xu Luodi hurriedly. “Just help me get rid of the Spirit minion. With that out of the way, I can easily smash this guy to pieces.” He glared ruthlessly at Meng Hao.

What Xu Luodi didn't know was that true cruelty would not come to bear upon Meng Hao, but rather Sang Luo, lonely as snow. Something would happen that Sang Luo would never forget for the rest of his life. It would give him nightmares for the rest of his days, and leave a shadow on his soul... and it would happen shortly.

Perhaps afterwards, he would no longer feel as lonely as snow....

Xiao Caifeng's name in Chinese is 肖彩凤 xiào cǎi fèng – Xiao is a family name. Cai means “colorful.” Feng means “phoenix.” ←

Sang Luo's name in Chinese is 丧罗 sàng luō – This is not a realistic name. Sang means “funeral” or “mourning.” Luo means “catch” or “net” ←

# Chapter 171: Blood Demon Dao Child

Sang Luo gave an arrogant snort that was apparently a response to Xu Luodi. Xu Luodi seemed to glow with vitality as he gazed upon approaching Meng Hao. His eyes were thick with cruelty.

“Today, Xu Luodi will help you to understand that when you help someone you shouldn’t, you will incur my wrath!” he said, his voice filled with crazed fervor. “And I will also help you to understand what Shaman Cultivators fear the most!”

The various Xiao Clan members were all pale-faced. Xiao Change’en laughed a bitter laugh, well aware that he had no way to undo what had already been done. He took a deep breath, and strode forward, power from his Cultivation base suddenly exploding out. It was the power of the mid Foundation Establishment stage, but it seemed somewhat weak. He was reaching the end of his longevity, so his Qi vessels had long since begun to wither. With effort, he could display the power of the mid Foundation Establishment stage, but in doing so, would actually harm his life force.

“The matter today has to do with the Xiao Clan, not any outsider,” he said, his entire body seeming to grow taller. “This person wasn’t invited here by the Xiao Clan, he’s only passing through. If the disappearance of the Xiao Clan is the will of the Heavens, then take this Spirit lake! But if you intend to take any of my Clan members, then you must treat them well. Otherwise I’ll make you pay, even if I have to die in the process!” His words echoed out with great power, causing Xu Luodi’s brow to furrow.

As for Sang Luo the midget, he emitted a shrieking laugh.

Meng Hao looked over at Xiao Chang’en, and suddenly his feelings toward the man changed. He nodded, and then coolly said, “Fellow Daoist Xiao, didn’t you give this lake to me as a gift? In that case, it belongs to me. Does anyone here dare to attempt to take it away!?” The vines in front of him shot toward Sang Luo and Xu Luodi.

Sang Luo let out an ear-piercing laugh which was filled with contempt and disdain. He flipped his sleeve grandly, and from within a black sealing

stone flew out. It expanded as it shot forward, emitting a strong pressure that caused all of the vines to stop in their tracks. Only the main trunk vine continued onward, howling.

Sang Luo's piercing laughter accompanied him as he took a step forward. He lifted his right arm to reveal a hand much smaller than an average person's. He waved it toward the approaching main trunk vine; a black wind sprang up and whistled toward the vine.

At the same time, Xu Luodi's laughter filled the air. His body flashed as he made a beeline toward Meng Hao, his eyes shining with fierce killing intent. The instant he took to motion, however, Xiao Chang'en suddenly leaped to obstruct his path. A look of disdain covering his face, Xu Luodi flicked his wide sleeve. A roaring sound filled the air, and Xiao Chang'en was pushed back.

"I'm not going to kill you for now," he laughed. "We'll be relatives by marriage soon, and still have wedding wine to drink." He shot toward Meng Hao. "And now I'll help you to understand that what Shaman Cultivators fear most is being beheaded!" He laughed arrogantly.

Meng Hao's face, on the other hand, was the same as ever. It hadn't changed even the slightest bit as he allowed Xu Luodi to approach.

When Xu Luodi was roughly nine meters away, Meng Hao's eyes suddenly shone with a cold light. He didn't retreat, but instead flickered, and suddenly appeared directly in the path of Xu Luodi. He lifted his hand, and a billowing Flame Sea appeared along with a roaring, three hundred meter long Flame Dragon.

When the Flame Dragon appeared, Xu Luodi's expression suddenly changed to one of complete disbelief.

"That... that...." It was almost as if he didn't dare to believe what he was seeing. But he felt the intense pressure exuded by the Flame Dragon, which far exceeded that of the late Foundation Establishment stage.

A sense of life-or-death danger filled his entire body, inundating his head with a booming drone. It was as if his body had been struck with countless lightning bolts. His face continued to be filled with disbelief.



“Late Foundation Establishment!!” His body began to tremble, and intense dread shone from his eyes. How could he ever have imagined that the young man of the early Foundation Establishment stage could possibly erupt with the power of late Foundation Establishment? As for his so-called beheading, the person he thought he could so easily defeat had suddenly transformed into a violent beast who could slaughter him hundreds of thousands of times over!

It wasn't just him who was shocked. Xiao Chang'en gasped and stared, dumbstruck. He was literally incapable of reacting to what he was seeing. His mind filled with buzzing. And then, his eyes filled with wild joy.

When the Flame Dragon appeared, the vines that had been suppressed by Sang Luo the midget suddenly shook and lifted up. Within the black robe, two eyes emanated shock.

All of this takes some time to describe, but actually happened in an instant. Even as Xu Luodi's voice could be heard, it was replaced by a blood-curdling scream which sounded out throughout the whole area. The three hundred meter long Flame Dragon slammed into him, instantly transforming his body into bits of ash which floated in the air. Only his scream remained behind, echoing through the air.

His bag of holding flew into Meng Hao's hand.

As the scene played out in front of everyone, Xiao Chang'en's expression grew excited. Next to him, Xiao Caifeng gazed at Meng Hao, her eyes filled with a strange glow.

There is no need to even mention the rest of the Xiao Clansmen, who stared at Meng Hao with excited inspiration.

Sang Luo's expression was unsightly. Having witnessed Xu Luodi's death, his heart now was now thumping. He was a cautious person by nature, so he immediately retreated. He was of the late Foundation Establishment stage, but he wasn't the type to risk himself. His body flashed as he attempted to flee. In his mind, his opponent would most likely have some apprehensions, and wouldn't pursue.

If his opponent didn't pursue, it would be evidence that he viewed

himself as inferior. In that case, Sang Luo could make a sudden reverse attack to kill him. This was a tactic that he had frequently employed, and had practiced until the proverbial furnace flames burned blue. However, as soon as he began to fly off, Meng Hao gave off a cold harrumph and then leaped into the air, transforming into a prismatic beam that shot after Sang Luo.

Seeing this, Sang Luo's face immediately fell.

"The fact that he's chasing me proves that he thinks he can kill me. This can't be right!" His heart trembled as he raced forward. He waved his right hand, causing the black sealing stone to emit a buzzing sound as it shot toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao could fight with late Foundation Establishment Cultivators who had nine Dao Pillars, although he couldn't do so lightly. Sang Luo, however, only had a mere seven Dao Pillars. Meng Hao had the luxury of being able to look down on him. His right hand flickered with an incantation gesture and the two wooden swords appeared. One shot toward the black seal, the other became a colorful beam that shot in pursuit of Sang Luo.

A boom filled the air as the black sealing stone was shattered into pieces. Sang Luo let out an angry howl. He eyed the approaching wooden sword, and his body trembled. He quickly snapped a jade slip between his fingers, and then made an incantation gesture with both hands, after which he waved the index of his right finger in the air in front of him.

As he did, everything around him seemed to grow dark, as if his finger were sucking in some strange power from around him. His body began to emanate an annoying, prickly Qi that caused Meng Hao to frown.

The first time he had sensed a Qi similar to this was back in the Black Sieve Sect 1. This Qi, however, was much weaker, like a firefly compared to a full moon. Actually, now that he thought about it, he had experienced a similar reaction when he was in the cave in the mountain valley.

A booming sound once again filled the air as the wooden sword came screeching to a stop in mid-air. A rushing wind blew back the midget's

robes, revealing an ugly, scarred face and two strange eyes filled with fear. Beads of sweat dripped down his face.

“Fellow Daoist, let’s talk things through,” said Sang Luo nervously. He could tell that whereas he was using all the power he could muster, his opponent was acting casually.

The differences between masters are usually instantly obvious!

Meng Hao took a moment to sense the Qi emanating off of the midget. His heart thumped. He had his speculations regarding this Qi, and now that he had seen it once again, he lifted his hand and extended a finger.

“Demon Sealing, Eighth Hex!”

As his finger descended, everything grew dark. Sang Luo suddenly began to tremble, and his eyes shone with astonishment. He immediately sensed the Qi of heaven and earth changing. Suddenly, his Cultivation base was suppressed. A whizzing sound could be heard as the wooden sword in front of him shot forward; in the blink of an eye, it would plunge into his neck.

His eyes filled with despair. However, at this exact moment, Meng Hao flicked his sleeve. The wooden sword, instead of ripping his head off, spun down and then carried Sang Luo with it back toward Meng Hao. Meng Hao reached out and grabbed Sang Luo by the neck.

At this moment, Sang Luo’s Cultivation base was restored and he could move his body again. His face was pale, though, his eyes filled with terror. He didn’t dare to move even an inch. The hand which clamped down on his neck emanated a feeling of death that caused his heart to tremble. In fact, being this close to Meng Hao caused his entire person to shake.

The feeling caused by the Qi that emanated from Meng Hao caused his heart to seize with terror.

His face was pale as he stammered, “You’re... you’re...”

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the world, there was a mountain range that was covered in black clouds year round. Within a valley in this mountain range were two young people. They sat upright, gazing at the Go board

which lay between them, seemingly lost in thought.

One of the young people wore white clothing along with an indifferent expression. This youth's features were beautiful to the extreme, almost otherworldly. The fan in his hand slowly waved back and forth.

The other person wore a blue garment. He looked to be about thirty years of age. He held a Go piece in his hands as he stared down thoughtfully at the board. Hanging from his face was a jade pendant. Suddenly, a popping sound could be heard, and a crack appeared on its surface.

When the crack appeared, the blue-robed young man frowned. He looked at the jade piece, and then back at the Go board.

"Is something wrong?" asked the white-robed youth in a light, tender voice.

"Nothing," replied the blue-robed young man respectfully. "It's just my good-for-nothing brother. He must have offended someone who he's not a match for. He wants me to save him."

"That would be Sang Luo, correct...?" The white-robed youth smiled. "Go ahead and check out the situation. I don't have anything else to do, I'll tag along."

The blue-robed youth immediately stood up. "Your highness, your status as a Dao Child is so lofty, I don't dare...."

"There's no harm." This white-robed youth was none other than a Dao Child of the Blood Demon Sect!

If you want to review the part where he sensed the Qi in the Black Sieve Sect, check out Chapter 143: Ghost in the Night ↩

# Chapter 172: Charging into mid Foundation Establishment!

Within the Xiao Clan mountain village, Xiao Chang'en's face was filled with enthusiasm as he gazed at Meng Hao. His fellow clansmen stared with similar fanaticism. Meng Hao nodded toward them, but said nothing. He entered his shielded room next to the lake, holding Sang Luo by the neck. The lightning mist appeared.

He sat down cross-legged and loosened his grip on Sang Luo. He didn't fight back, but instead stood there pale-faced in front of Meng Hao, a look of respect shining in his eyes. Inside, however, he was nervously waiting for his older brother to arrive and save him. His tiny eyes darted around, eventually falling upon the hat, which still stood next to the lake. He heard the hat's garrulous voice, but didn't dare to stare. He suddenly got the feeling that this place was incredibly bizarre, even more ghastly than his own remote, lonely mountain.

Meng Hao looked at Sang Luo for a moment, trying to decide what to do with him. Finally, he lifted his hand into the air and made a grasping motion. The Qi emanating from Sang Luo's body condensed into Meng Hao's palm. It seemed invisible, but to Meng Hao, it was very prickly and irritating in nature.

He frowned, looking closer at the Qi. His eyes flickered.

"Could this be Demonic Qi....?" he murmured to himself. He let the Qi disperse, and then looked closely over Sang Luo. Sang Luo felt goosebumps underneath Meng Hao's gaze.

"Fellow Daoist...." he said, but was interrupted by Meng Hao.

"There's an evildoing Cultivator here who needs to be converted...." he said and then coughed lightly. Hearing this, Sang Luo gaped in astonishment. Suddenly, the meat jelly, which had been talking to the fish in the lake just now, leaped up and seemed to stare fixedly at Sang Luo.

"Who? Who is it?" said the meat jelly excitedly, rushing over. "You? My

poor evildoer, you can't do that! It's immoral. In the name of Justice, allow me to convert you...." Before Sang Luo could even react, Meng Hao flicked his sleeve, pushing him backward and snatching his bag of holding. At the same time, the black net shot out and wrapped up Sang Luo tightly.

Then Meng Hao shot backward, putting some space between himself and Sang Luo, who watched stupefied as all of this happened. At that instant, the meat jelly hat landed onto Sang Luo's head.

It sighed. "Child, there's no need to fear. Just behave, and allow the mighty embodiment of Justice to lead you back from the path of wickedness...." It seemed to be fairly leaping with excitement. "What a well-behaved little child. There's no need to resist, no need fight back, no need to feel perplexed. I will help you. Listen, the first thing you need to do is...." As the meat jelly prattled on, Sang Luo's body began to tremble. However, he didn't dare to fight back.

Meng Hao felt a bit sorry for Sang Luo. He erased the branding within Sang Luo's bag of holding. When he opened it, his eyes shined brightly. There was quite an accumulation of Spirit Stones inside, many times more than that which had been given to him by the Xiao Clan.

"This should be just about the amount I need for duplication purposes. Plus, I have a handful of bags of holding that I acquired in the Black Sieve Sect's Blessed Land. There are a few Sieve Earth Pills in those. Not many, but a few." He waved his hand, causing the lightning mist to condense so that no one in the area could see inside. Then, he pulled out the copper mirror and began to duplicate.

Time passed, and soon dusk fell. From outside the lightning mist, enraged shouting could be heard coming out of Sang Luo's mouth. It seemed to be filled with an indescribable torment and misery.

"Be quiet! Let me go! Aaahhhhhh! You damned hat! Shut up!!"

"Ai, don't be like that, child. You know... you interrupted me. I forgot where I left off. Oh well, I'll just start over. Listen well, okay? The path of evil is filled with thistles and thorns. But don't worry, child, I'm here. I definitely will not allow the thistles and thorns to stab into your tender

buttocks....”

Meng Hao glanced outside, feeling a bit sympathetic for Sang Luo. Then he looked down at the several dozen or so Sieve Earth Pills in front of him. He took a deep breath, and then picked one up and placed it into his mouth.

It dissolved as soon as it entered, turning into a wave of spiritual power that Meng Hao had not felt enter his body in a long time. His body was like a parched desert suddenly inundated with nourishing water; his face lit up, and he closed his eyes to begin doing breathing exercises.

Slowly, he filtered out the sounds of the outside world and sank into Cultivation. One pill. Two pills. Three pills.... As he swallowed the pills, beams of moonlight in the night sky began to twist and turn. The descended down toward the earth, and onto Meng Hao.

From a distance, it had the appearance of a massive sheet of silk descending upon the Xiao Clan.

The Sieve Earth Pill really did deserve to be called a divine pill of the Black Sieve Sect, and one of the five most effective pills in the Southern Domain for the Foundation Establishment Stage. It was powerfully effective, much more so than Meng Hao had imagined. When he put the seventeenth pill into his mouth, his body instantly began to shake. The indistinct image of a rapidly congealing fourth Dao Pillar was suddenly visible inside him. When it was complete, Meng Hao’s Cultivation base would have broken through to the mid Foundation Establishment stage!

He took a deep breath, frowning as he looked up at the shining waterfall of moonlight above him in the sky.

“It’s really a bit too conspicuous. This is an amazing pill, but it’s definitely going to attract a lot of attention....” There was nothing to do about it, however. The only thing he could do was try to break through as quickly as possible, form the fourth Dao Pillar and reach mid Foundation Establishment. He took a deep breath and picked up the eighteenth Sieve Earth Pill. When he placed it into his mouth, his three Perfect Dao Pillars trembled, sucking in boundless spiritual power. The fourth Dao Pillar was

rapidly becoming solid.

Outside, in the darkness of the night, the sheets of moonlight had indeed attracted attention within the Xiao Clan. Xiao Chang'en might be nearing the end of his longevity, but his eyesight was sharp. His eyes narrowed, and he immediately moved over to the shielded area within which Meng Hao was practicing Cultivation. He sat down cross-legged to keep guard.

Meng Hao had showed great kindness to the Xiao Clan. Xiao Chang'en knew that after his own death, the only chance for his clan to survive had to do with Meng Hao. Therefore, he had resolved that no matter what, he would not allow Meng Hao's Cultivation to be disturbed.

Meanwhile, outside the Xiao Clan, the sheets of moonlight had caused quite a stir in the various Cultivation Clans in the area. More than a few people flew up into the air to investigate the area where the moonlight was cascading onto.

This was especially true of Sang Luo's older brother, the blue-robed young man. He flew along together with the white-robed youth. They flew through the air unhurriedly. It seemed as if they weren't going very fast, but in fact, they shot forward several hundred meters with each burst of flight.

When they saw the falling sheets of moonlight, the white-robed youth's eyes narrowed. The blue-robed young man frowned.

"That appears to be the same place where Sang Luo is...."

"Interesting. Someone in Blood Demon Sect territory is consuming a Sieve Earth Pill from the Black Sieve Sect. And from the look of it, more than one pill..."

At this exact moment, deep in a forested region some distance from the Xiao Clan, was an enormous tree. Within the tree was a group of ten Cultivators sitting closed-eyed in meditation. Each member of this group had a sword strapped to his back, and they all wore identical clothing. It was very quiet; not a crow or sparrow could be heard. But when the sheets of moonlight appeared, the ten people opened their eyes to look at it.



Chen Fan was among the group. He looked off into the distance, frowning. Hushed discussion immediately broke out among these Cultivators, all of whom were all disciples of the Solitary Sword Sect.

“That area is near the border of the Blood Demon Sect. What is that phenomenon...?”

“That’s the sign of someone consuming a Sieve Earth Pill from the Black Sieve Sect. It can’t be covered up. Someone in that area must be consuming medicinal pills.”

“Just how many pills did that person consume? That amount of moonlight is shocking....”

Within the Xiao Clan manor, Clan members all began to grow nervous, as if they were about to face up against a powerful foe. The past days had been a mixture of both pleasant surprises and horrifying dread. Once and again, they had faced extermination as a clan, and repeatedly had been saved. As of this moment, their hearts pounded. This was especially true when they saw the conspicuous cascading moonlight. It only served to cause them more anxiety and nervousness.

Xiao Caifeng was pale faced. She had a talent for talismans, but was hindered by her Cultivation base, and couldn’t fully employ their power. She could only stand off to the side, silently watching Xiao Chang’en sitting cross-legged as he guarded over Meng Hao.

Not much time passed before beams of multi-colored light filled the night sky, screaming toward the Xiao Clan from all directions. From the look of it, there were at least ten figures. They floated there in the sky, eyes glittering as their gazes fell onto the Xiao Clan, and Meng Hao’s secluded meditation area, upon which poured sheets of moonlight.

An old man of the early Foundation Establishment stage approached, laughing loudly. “Interesting. I think I’ll just have to see who exactly is in secluded meditation, causing such a scene.” From his expression, it was clear he did not have good intentions. Greed flickered in his eyes. Obviously, he intended to disturb the meditation and snatch away the luck of whoever sat within.

It seemed everyone in the area had similar plans; the Xiao Clan was by no means weak. However, the Xu Clan was not the only one in the area who had coveted the lake. Many of the surrounding clans had eyed it like a tiger eyeing its prey.

The newly arrived Cultivators watched the old man as Xiao Chang'en looked up at him. The power of Xiao Chang'en's Cultivation base suddenly exploded out. He took a deep breath and shot up into the sky.

A boom rang out, and the old man spun backward out of control, coughing up some blood along the way. Xiao Chang'en's face looked deathly pale as he hovered in the air, glaring around.

"I, Xiao Chang'en, already have one foot in the coffin," he said coolly. "Life and death mean little to me. Anyone who wishes to tread the path of death with me, please, step forward." His Cultivation base was not incredibly high, but his words contained a powerful threat.

Underneath the shield, the growth of Meng Hao's Cultivation base had reached a critical juncture. As he continued to consume the Sieve Earth Pills, his fourth Dao Pillar was more than half solidified. It wouldn't be long before it was complete. When that happened, Meng Hao would not be infinitely more powerful than before, but he would be able to sweep effortlessly across the Foundation Establishment stage!

That was the power of a Perfect Foundation!

# Chapter 173: Rejected by the Heavens?

## Plunder!

Meng Hao was focused on breaking through to form his fourth Dao Pillar. However, regarding what was happening on the outside, it was no surprise to him. He had anticipated that such circumstances would come about. The cascading moonlight had focused attention on his increase in level. Although it hadn't attracted universal attention, it had certainly caused quite a disturbance.

Meng Hao was well aware that as more time passed, the situation would grow more volatile. The best method to bring matters to a conclusion was to finish breaking through as quickly as possible.

However.... a Perfect Foundation could not absorb the spiritual energy of heaven and earth. He was only able to rely on the Sieve Earth Pills, and despite their extraordinariness, the process was becoming more difficult. He could clearly sense that they were losing their efficacy.

Based on his current momentum, it didn't seem they would be enough to complete the fourth Dao Pillar.

As Meng Hao silently continued to Cultivate, outside, Xiao Chang'en's words echoed out amidst the moonlight. Everything was silent for a moment afterward, and then cold laughter rang out. Three figures shot forward.

Their features were indistinct within the darkness of night, but their Cultivation bases rippled, making it clear that one of their numbers was of the mid Foundation Establishment stage.

In the surrounding Cultivation Clans, even the mid Foundation Establishment stage was considered quite powerful. Were it not so, the Xiao Clan would not have been able to occupy the Spirit Lake for so long. It was only now that Xiao Chang'en was reaching the end of his longevity that the current situation had come to be.

The three figures whistled through the air toward Xiao Chang'en. A

boom exploded out as the four people collided in battle. Xiao Chang'en coughed up a mouthful of blood. His face was pale as he flew backward like a kite with a broken string. The mid Foundation Establishment Cultivator laughed coldly and proceeded forward.

The other two shot toward Meng Hao's shield, laughing.

It seemed to be a moment of crisis. Xiao Chang'en was torn; he knew that Meng Hao must be at a critical juncture; unfortunately, he was currently powerless to intervene. Even burning some of his life force to gain extra power would be useless.

The two early Foundation Establishment Cultivators reached the shield; as soon as they touched it, a rumbling sound emerged. Within the space of two breaths, the shield collapsed.

The shield had been created by Xiao Caifeng, who was only at the Qi Condensation stage; for it to hold up against the early Foundation Establishment stage for the space of three breaths testified to the outstanding latent talent of the one who had created the talisman.

Booming echoed out as the shield was destroyed. As the two early Foundation Establishment stage Cultivators slammed into the lightning mist, miserable screams echoed out. In an instant, their bodies were surrounded by lightning; cracking sounds could be heard as they were thrown backward, blood spewing from their mouths. Expressions of shock covered their faces as their Dao Pillars trembled on the verge of collapse.

The lightning mist roiled; its protection extended about thirty meters out from Meng Hao in all directions, creating a no-man's land which no one could enter.

Xiao Chang'en heaved a sigh of relief. The mid Foundation Establishment Cultivator with whom he had been battling paused, looking over his shoulder at the lightning mist, astonishment filling his eyes.

Within the lightning mist, Meng Hao opened his eyes. They glowed brightly as he frowned and looked down at his last three Sieve Earth Pills. As for his fourth Dao Pillar, it was about ninety percent complete. These pills would be insufficient to complete the last ten percent.

“These Sieve Earth Pills are only so effective.... Perhaps I won’t be able to reach the mid Foundation Establishment stage after all....” A stubborn look shone within his eyes. He knew that his path of Cultivation was different from that of others; he had acquired incredible battle prowess, but the Cultivation he practiced was much more challenging. Even as he thought of these things, a racket could be heard coming from the outside.

“Fellow Daoists, this person’s Cultivation has stirred up such power, I’m afraid that once he emerges, all of our Cultivation Clans will be at his mercy. Let’s take advantage of this opportunity to destroy him now to prevent future troubles.”

“Correct. The Xiao Clan is weak. Their existence is meaningless. The extermination of such Clans is the natural order, it can’t be changed!”

“Let’s attack together. This lightning mist can’t hold up against all of us!”

The ten or more Foundation Establishment Cultivators outside began attacking the lightning mist in unison.

All of these people were from local Cultivator Clans; as they attacked, booming sounds lifted up to fill the sky. The lightning mist seethed violently.

“An evil heart, is a useless life.” Meng Hao’s eyes sparkled icily as he looked out through the lightning mist. He quickly gathered up the remaining three pills and popped them into his mouth.

They immediately dissolved, and the cascading moonlight grew stronger, as if a river were pouring down into Meng Hao’s body. Although their effectiveness was waning, his fourth Dao Pillar was now just a hair away from being complete.

Just as the Dao Pillar was about to appear in full, Meng Hao’s suddenly sensed an inexplicable roaring within his body. His expression flickered as he realized that his body was starting to wither, as if his flesh and blood and life force, even his Cultivation base, were being sucked into the fourth Dao Pillar.

He had just unlocked another of the secrets of the Perfect Foundation. It was with unbridled power that the fourth Dao Pillar began of its own will to suck in everything into it.

It seemed that the fourth Dao Pillar would form at any cost, even if it caused the death of Meng Hao!

His face flickered at this sudden turn of events. He had never imagined that something like this would happen. It was at this exact moment that the lightning mist finally collapsed under the attack of the ten Foundation Establishment Cultivators. They rushed in.

Meng Hao eyed them approaching, his face grim. His body was withering, and his life force was trickling away. The hair on his head had already begun turning white. His Cultivation base was still there, though. Suddenly, an early Foundation Establishment Cultivator appeared in front of him. Before the man could react, Meng Hao's hand shot out and grabbed him by the throat. He squeezed, and the Cultivator's eyes filled with disbelief. The man's neck shattered.

Even as he died, Meng Hao's body trembled, and his eyes filled with a strange light. The man's corpse suddenly began to shrink and wither. Within the blink of an eye, it was a mere skeleton. The man's Cultivation base rushed in through Meng Hao's hand and entered the fourth Dao Pillar.

"So that's how it is!" Meng Hao's eyes grew brighter. "I have a perfect Foundation, but when my first three Dao Pillars formed within the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament, there was more than enough spiritual energy to absorb, so I couldn't even sense the potency of the Dao Pillars. But now, things are clear. After reaching a certain point, the fourth Dao Pillar reaches a phase in which only death can stop its progress. When this happens, it will even consume my own life force. The reason is because it can't absorb spiritual energy from the outside world, only from my flesh and blood!

"Perfection. Perfection is so potent! But such potency is also a weapon. I've been rejected by the Heavens. Therefore, I must plunder from the

living! The bodies of Cultivators are filled with spiritual energy that does not belong to heaven and earth! Therefore, it can be pillaged away! Now I understand. It seems that in the future, it will be like this every time I form a new Dao Pillar!

“Today... my fourth Dao Pillar will appear!”

These thoughts ran through Meng Hao’s head in an instant. He loosened his grip, then looked around at the surrounding Cultivators, his eyes radiating icy cold. His body flashed as he shot toward them.

Miserable screams rang out. All of these people had Cultivation bases at the mid Foundation Establishment level at the highest; most were at the early Foundation Establishment stage. Could they possibly match up against Meng Hao? As Meng Hao passed each person, his hand would snake out, and with no effort on his part, the fourth Dao Pillar would feed, thirstily sucking in energy.

Body after body turned into bones. Before the death of each Cultivator, their Cultivation base would be sucked rapidly into Meng Hao, consumed by his Dao Pillar. Soon, Meng Hao was no longer withered, and his flesh and blood began to rebuild.

As Xiao Chang’en observed this happening, dread appeared on his face. The Cultivators who had moments ago been charging forward, suddenly began to retreat at high speed.

In their eyes, Meng Hao was no Cultivator; he had transformed into some type of evil demon. Wherever he passed, blood-curdling screams could be heard, and he left behind only ragged corpses. Their minds reeled, and expressions of unbridled horror appeared on their faces.

“What magic is this!?!?”

“What is he doing!?!?”

“This guy... he’s sucking up the life and Cultivation bases of all those dead Fellow Daoists!?!?”

The remaining twenty or so Cultivators were scared witless and retreated in chaos. Meng Hao caught up with one of them. As he placed

his hand on the crown of the man's head, a blood-curdling scream echoed out. His body began to shrivel, and then he died.

Meng Hao's face was no longer pale and bloodless; it was now ruddy and filled with life. He took a deep breath, and in his mind he suddenly recalled the scene in Patriarch Reliance's Immortal's cave, when Patriarch Reliance had absorbed the Core Formation Cultivators 1.

"The Great Art of Demonic Life?" thought Meng Hao, his eyes flickering. It seemed that what he was doing now was very similar indeed to the Great Art of Demonic Life that Patriarch Reliance had used. "Or perhaps this is some type of enlightenment that comes from being in a kill or be killed situation. The Great Art of Demonic Life. Demonic Life...." Meng Hao sighed inwardly as he suppressed his deeply-ingrained Confucian way of thinking. His body flickered with the power of the fourth Dao Pillar. He sighed as his hand clasped around the throat of another Cultivator. The fourth Dao Pillar sucked in the man's Cultivation base. Soon, the fourth Dao Pillar would complete its circle and be complete.

"The path of my Perfect Foundation will be strewn with mountains of corpses and seas of blood. I... understand." He sighed again, and yet continued forward without hesitation. His heart did not grow soft. Confucianism would always exist within him, and he would never be truly merciless. However, when the circumstances required, he could act without mercy.

To revisit the scene of Patriarch Reliance using the Great Art of Demonic Life, check out Chapter 82: The Great Art of Demonic Life



# Chapter 174: Perfect Mid Foundation Establishment!

Moonlight shone over the savage scene. It wasn't just Xiao Chang'en whose heart was filled with icy dread; the rest of the Xiao Clan members looked at Meng Hao, terrified.

The other surrounding Cultivators retreated as quickly as possible, knowing that the slightest hesitation could result in a horrifying death. However, Meng Hao was faster. He looked like a specter, his hair floating around his head as he pursued his quarry. He sucked in a Cultivation base and life force, then loosened his grip, dropping the shrivelled, trembling skeletal body to the ground.

It wasn't as if none of the Cultivators tried to fight back; unfortunately, their resistance was futile. To Meng Hao, they were like nothing. Even before the emergence of his fourth Dao Pillar, Meng Hao could easily battle the late Foundation Establishment stage. Now that his fourth Dao Pillar was almost complete, he was on the very threshold of the mid Foundation Establishment stage.

What could these outcasts from the Blood Demon Sect possibly do to resist him?!

It was their doom to be here today, a deadly choice on their part. They had chosen to destroy the lightning mist, and in doing so, had unleashed the spirit of death!

Meng Hao was more than half recovered now. His hair was no longer white, nor was his skin withered. Everything that his Dao Pillar had sucked away from him was now restored.

His fourth Dao Pillar emanated a demonic aura, as if it desired to plunder and consume all spiritual power!

I am cut off from heaven and earth, so I will take it upon myself to plunder! This potency is Perfection!

Boom!

Meng Hao closed in on two early Foundation Establishment Cultivators. They turned around, roaring as they unleashed the full power of the might of their Cultivation bases. They used magical arts, they used magical treasures, going all out against Meng Hao.

A booming echoed out, and then Meng Hao was standing directly in front of one of them. His palm pushed lightly against the man's face. A withered skeleton dropped to the ground.

His body flickered; another miserable cry echoed out. Everyone who remained alive trembled as they watched a middle-aged man grow old. His hair became white and then fell out. His flesh and blood wilted away. His eyes clouded over as he took one last breath and then passed into death.

Meng Hao sighed. He had no deep grudge against these people. However, they had appeared here and had attacked him with the intention of wiping him out and preventing him from making a breakthrough in his Cultivation. Although they were targeting him because of the Xiao Clan, the fact was: they were here. To suddenly be facing Meng Hao, was simply their fate.

Meng Hao understood; his eyes flashed with enlightenment, and he continued to attack without hesitation.

He sucked away the life force and Cultivation base of an old man of the mid Foundation Establishment stage, whereupon a loud roaring filled his body. It emanated out, filling the air, causing everyone to look on in shock.

The fleeing Cultivators trembled in dread. Everything that was happening was like a horrible dream, a nightmare which they would never be able to forget for the rest of their lives.

The image of Meng Hao had been branded indelibly onto their very souls, and would with them until their deaths.

As the boom rang out, a tremor ran through Meng Hao's body. He suddenly began to emit a golden light. It spread out, causing Meng Hao to appear as if he were covered with golden armor!

At the same time, the fourth Dao Pillar appeared in full; the roaring was

coming from the Dao Pillar itself. Up above in the sky, dark clouds began to congeal. It seemed as if within them, an invisible pair of eyes was staring down onto Meng Hao.

A feeling like that of Tribulation Lightning suddenly appeared. It disappeared almost immediately, as if it were simply observing, waiting until Core Formation to unleash its destructive punishment!

Though there was no wind, Meng Hao's hair whipped about his head wildly. With the appearance of his fourth Dao Pillar, he had now broken through to the mid level of Foundation Establishment!

With the power of the Perfect Foundation, Meng Hao was now the most powerful person of the Foundation Establishment stage among the five Sects and three Clans of the Southern Domain!

The moment he broke through, the blood drained from the faces of the surrounding Cultivators, and their bodies trembled. The Dao Pillars within their bodies suddenly began to quiver. In fact, cracks appeared on the Dao Pillars of some of the Cultivators, causing them to cough up blood, faces filled with astonishment.

It seemed like their Dao Pillars were ashamed to be in the presence of Meng Hao's Perfect Dao Pillars. With his Perfect Foundation, he was a sovereign among the Foundation Establishment stage. His incredible might and power caused the hearts of all other Foundation Cultivators to tremble, and their Dao Pillars to become unstable.

In fact, because of the influence of Meng Hao's Dao Pillars, the trembling Cultivators began to prostrate themselves toward him. This was not their idea; it was veneration toward their sovereign from the Dao Pillars themselves!

Their bodies were not even under their own control as they lowered their heads. Their minds were filled with roaring emptiness.

This was true crushing pressure; this was a power that had reached such a level that it created a relationship like that between heaven and earth.

In the Cultivation world, a crushing pressure is a power that exists

because of the vast difference between different Cultivation levels. However, this crushing pressure emanating from Meng Hao came from the Dao Pillar itself!

Perfect Dao Pillars can exhibit crushing pressure onto all other Dao Pillars. If a Cultivator who had completed the circle of Foundation Establishment had merely Fractured Dao Pillars, he could do nothing but tremble in front of Meng Hao.

This... this was the power of four Perfect Dao Pillars. It would be hard to imagine the power Meng Hao could wield after created his fifth, sixth, and even ninth Dao Pillars! What crushing pressure would he then be able to employ?!

At that time, it wouldn't matter if he faced a Cracked Foundation or even a Flawless Foundation; they would all be as weak as ants to Meng Hao. After completing nine Perfect Dao Pillars, then perhaps Meng Hao would be able to pass into Core Formation!

Meng Hao had no way to predict what that would be like, but his heart filled with increasingly powerful anticipation nonetheless.

It was at this time that just outside of the Xiao Clan, two beams of prismatic light shot through the air. One flickered with blue light, the other white as they flew forward and caught sight of Meng Hao.

"So it turns out to be a Chosen!" said the white-robed youth. The Blood Demon Sect's current Dao Child looked down, eyes glowing. They were filled with battle, seemingly kindled into burning. They flashed like lightning as they examined Meng Hao.

To the side was the blue-robed young man, the brother of Sang Luo. As he gazed upon Meng Hao, his eyes narrowed and his heart filled with an indescribable sense of danger!

At this same moment, in a location not too far away, but not too near, existed an enormous basin in the earth. There were actually ten such basins, each one filled with richly ornamented buildings and pagodas. Each basin also contained a lake.

From a distance this place looked... mysterious and dark. This land... was none other than one of the five great Sects of the Southern Domain... the Blood Demon Sect!

Within the center of the ten basins was a tree. One half of the tree was wilted and dry, the other half was lush and flourishing. It was a very bizarre sight, and clearly something beyond ordinary. This tree was a precious treasure of the Blood Demon Sect!

Underneath the tree, an indistinct figure sat cross-legged. Suddenly, the figure raised its head. Its vision pierced through everything until it reached the Xiao Clan, and Meng Hao.

A smile appeared on its face, and an indistinct murmuring could be heard.

“So, it was not in vain that I helped you those three times,” the indistinct figure said, its voice husky. “This kid has certainly grown up.... It seems Yu’er is there too. Perhaps this is the tribulation that violet-robed Cultivator spoke of the day she was born?” Thunder rumbled above in the sky.

“The Dao of the Heavens is not dead, I shall not enter the yellow springs of the netherworld!” The figure looked up into the sky, and its face suddenly emitted two beams of ferocious, red light. This was none other than... The blood-red figure who had appeared that year at the Reliance Sect!

This was the blood-red Demon Lord who had flashed through the sky to save Meng Hao from obliteration at the hands of Lord Revelation. 1

In the air above the Xiao Clan, a golden light glittered. The surrounding Cultivators trembled in fear. Meng Hao turned his head, his gaze sweeping to fall upon the white-robed Cultivator.

He could only be described as beautiful. His body was covered with a voluminous white robe, and he emanated a demonic aura. However, in addition to the demonic aura, there was a refined and cultivated air. He floated there, and though he was accompanied by another Cultivator, all eyes were on him. Even if there were countless thousands upon thousands

of people present, he would be the center of attention.

His beauty, coupled with his demonic air, made it such that even most women would have trouble surpassing him. Were he wearing women's clothing, he would be a beauty unmatched in his generation.

As Meng Hao's looked upon the white-robed youth, their gazes locked. Instantly, Meng Hao could sense the desire for battle within those eyes. Next to the beautiful Blood Demon Dao Child was a blue-robed Cultivator. His gaze immediately fell upon Sang Luo, who laid entangled in the black net on the ground not too far off. He was just about to spring into action when the white-robed youth held out a hand to stop him.

"You're not his match." The white-robed youth smiled. "I find this person... very interesting." His smile was warm and calm. Were this person to be wearing women's clothing, this consummately elegant smile would make flowers grow dim!

After smiling, the white-robed youth took a step forward. This step landed on air, but as it did, Meng Hao's eyes narrowed. It felt as if the step had landed directly on his heart. His entire condition changed, as if he were suddenly under great pressure.

A wave of power rippled out from the white-robed youth, clearly caused by a completed circle of late Foundation Establishment.

"These are my Seven Demonic Lotus Steps. Each step is unbreakable. Take care, Fellow Daoist." With a smile, the white-robed youth began to take a second step. His power suddenly surged to immense heights, as if the power itself contained his will. It spread out in all directions.

Meng Hao's eyes gleamed. As the white-robed youth approached, a strange Qi seemed to be building up in the area. It circled around, emanating a mysterious aroma. It smelled pleasant; however, it could cause bewilderment which could lead to total loss of oneself.

As the second step descended, Meng Hao began to shake, and the gleam in his eye grew sharper. Smiling, the white-robed youth began to take a third step. As it fell, the power in the area grew exponentially stronger. His body seemed to transform into something invincible. It was only the third

step, but in Meng Hao's perception, time itself seemed to suddenly whiz by. It was as if the entire world were being replaced by something else.

If you want to review the two previous appearances of the Demon Lord, check out Chapter 34: Fame from 1,000 Years Ago! and Chapter 94: You Really Want Me To Come Out? ←

# Chapter 175: Li Shiqi

A strong feeling filled Meng Hao. It was as if the area surrounding him was cut off from everything else. It felt like his Cultivation base was about to degrade and he would soon fall back to the early Foundation Establishment stage.

At the same time, an incredibly realistic vision appeared in his mind. He returned to Mount Daqing, to Yunjie County, to the window of his room, underneath the moonlight. He saw himself sitting there reading.

Meng Hao had never experienced a magical technique such as this. This was his first time. His eyes narrowed.

The white-robed youth's fourth step was just beginning!

As it did, Meng Hao's mind reeled, and more visions appeared. He suddenly realized that the state caused by his opponent would be impossible to break once the seventh step was reached. That was the pinnacle, and when that last step descended, his opponent would be able to employ a pressure so intense that he wouldn't need to attack.

That pressure contained a power that could sweep away the Foundation Establishment stage!

"If the art is unbreakable, then I must break the situation!"

Meng Hao's eyes glittered, and his head tilted up. He lifted his right hand and pointed down toward the ground. The earth seemed to shake, and yet, what was shaking was not the earth, but Meng Hao. Ghost images appeared everywhere; the only thing that didn't have a ghost image, was Meng Hao!

"This is the Eighth Hex, Body-sealing Finger," said Meng Hao coolly. "Take care, Fellow Daoist." He lifted his hand and pointed forward.

Suddenly, Meng Hao's body stopped vibrating. The ghost images all overlapped and descended toward the white-robed youth. They merged into his body, and suddenly, a conspicuous ghost image of the young man himself appeared. The fifth step that he had been about to take could no



longer be completed.

The white-robed youth's mind trembled; he looked at Meng Hao with eyes glowing, his expression dignified.

Meng Hao didn't attack. This battle was more of an exchange of techniques, not a battle to the death. Meng Hao stood there indifferently, calmly looking at the young man.

After the space of a single breath, the white-robed youth recovered. However, the power caused by the overlapping momentum of his steps had dissipated, nullified by Meng Hao.

The Seven Demonic Lotus Steps was an art that utilized the power of momentum. Once unleashed, even high-level Cultivation bases would have difficulty breaking it. From the time he had emerged as a figure in the Cultivation world until now, the white-robed youth had never encountered someone of the Foundation Establishment stage who could break the Seven Demonic Lotus Steps; not even Dao Children of the other Sects or Clans were able to.

But today, in this place, he had witnessed an unprecedented occurrence. His eyes shined with a strange light as he gazed at Meng Hao. His face filled with respect; this was an esteem that only powerful experts of the same generation would feel for each other.

"To receive without giving is not a principle by which I live," said Meng Hao coolly. "I also have an attack to share. Please prepare." He lifted his left hand, using the nail of his thumb to slice his middle finger. Blood flowed out, causing his middle finger to become crimson. His hand moved in a casual motion, but his eyes were filled with ferocity.

As he attacked, observers could not see anything special happening. However, the white-robed youth's pupils instantly constricted. From his perspective, everything had suddenly turned to the color of blood. His expression flickered slightly, and a sense of imminent, fatal danger welled up in him. His right hand shot up to slap his bag of holding. A branch appeared in his hand upon which grew three withered leaves and three luxuriant leaves. He waved it in front of him.

No sound could be heard, but faint ripples circled out. Meng Hao gave a bored snort and retreated backward a three paces. As he did, his power began to decline, so he stopped and took a step forward.

The step descended, seeming to trample directly on the heart of the white-robed youth, whose mind shook. His body swayed, as if a massive, invisible force were pushing down on it. He retreated backward a few paces, the blood draining from his face despite the aid of his magical item. As the color slowly returned to his face, he gave Meng Hao a deep look.

“Sir, I am Li Shiqi.” It seemed this white-robed youth actually had a girl’s name. He stared at Meng Hao as he asked in a soft voice, “Fellow Daoist, would it be possible for me to enquire as to your illustrious name?”

Meng Hao got an odd feeling when looking at the white-robed youth. There was something strange about him. He thought for a moment, then replied, “Meng Hao.”

“Brother Meng, the person you have in your custody is actually a blood relative of my Junior Brother. I hope you can release him. If he did anything to offend you, I offer my sincere apologies.”

Meng Hao looked at blue-robed youth who stood by Li Shiqi. He was currently looking at Sang Luo off in the distance. Meng Hao raised his right hand, and the black net loosened. Sang Luo, face pale, shot away with all the power he could muster. Meng Hao’s hat pursued him at top speed.

“Eee? Don’t run away. Meng Hao, how could you do such a thing?” The meat jelly roared angrily as it shot after Sang Luo. “You can’t do that, it’s immoral! You can’t just let him go. I haven’t rescued him from the path of evil yet....”

Sang Luo’s body trembled as he raced to the side of the blue-robed Cultivator. His face was covered with terror as he clutched at his older brother’s clothes and stared in horror at the approaching hat.

Li Shiqi stared in shock at the hat.

The meat jelly’s voice suddenly sounded surprised. “Eee? What are you looking at? You’re a female? Heavens, you look like a guy, but you’re

actually a girl. Strange, very strange. No rod, no rod!" It returned to Meng Hao, plopping down onto his head and once again changing color to bright green.

Li Shiqi's face suddenly looked extremely unsightly as she glared at the hat, and then Meng Hao. All the good feelings from moments before suddenly evaporated.

Meng Hao made a wry smile. The meat jelly had suddenly made everything very clear. Meng Hao suddenly had an acute understanding of why people called the meat jelly Ultimate Vexation.

Ignoring the looks on the faces of Meng Hao and Li Shiqi, it started to prattle on, apparently preparing to talk for at least three days and three nights without stopping. "Strange, so strange. You're actually a female... huh?" In the midst of its excitement, the meat jelly seemed to have found something else interesting. It looked off into the distance.

It was at this exact moment that off in the Blood Demon Sect, sitting cross-legged underneath the strange tree, the Demon Lord's body suddenly quivered. He immediately retracted his vision, cutting off all connection to the outside world.

"Dammit," said the indistinct image of the Demon Lord, panting. "How could that abominable thing have appeared. Didn't his excellency suppress it? And yet, there it is, attached to the body of a disciple of the Demon Sealing Sect!!

"I cannot get entangled with it. According to the legends, there were many powerful experts in ancient times who were driven insane by it.... It looks weak though, it must not have been able to sense me...."

Back in the Xiao Clan mountain village, the meat jelly hat gazed off into the distance. It seemed to be lost in thought for a moment, after which its body flickered, and it looked back at Li Shiqi.

Li Shiqi gave a cold snort and then glared angrily at Meng Hao. Without another word, she spun and flew off. The blue-robed Cultivator gave a dry cough, then picked up Sang Luo and transformed into a colorful beam that shot off into the distance.

“Eee? You’re leaving, little girl? Don’t leave! I haven’t finished talking....”

Meng Hao’s face once again filled with a dark expression. The surrounding Cultivators wanted to leave. Unfortunately, their Dao Pillars trembled, and they were incapable of even moving. They stared nervously at Meng Hao.

“From this day forward, none of you are permitted to step a foot into the Xiao Clan,” said Meng Hao coolly. He flicked his sleeve, unbinding the Cultivators. They immediately gave deep bows to Meng Hao, and pledged to follow his instructions. After that, they fled at top speed.

When they were gone, pale-faced Xiao Chang’en approached. Claspng hands, he bowed deeply to Meng Hao.

“Many thanks, benefactor!!”

All of the Xiao Clan members approached and began kowtowing to Meng Hao. Xiao Caifeng stared at him blankly for a moment, and then nodded.

Meng Hao looked around at the Xiao Clan. “I can’t stay here,” he said gently. “I must leave in a few days. The only help I can provide is what I’ve already done.”

“It’s enough,” said Xiao Chang’en, bowing deeply. “Fear of benefactor will keep the Xiao Clan safe for dozens of years to come. Once the Xiao Clan produces another Foundation Establishment Cultivator, then our position will be secured permanently.” The Death Qi which emanated from his body had grown stronger. Most likely, he would reach the end of his life within a year.

Meng Hao said nothing. After a long moment, he nodded, then returned into the lightning mist.

Three days later, Meng Hao chose to leave. Before departing, he severed two vines and left them in the Spirit lake. He helped Xiao Caifeng to brand them to herself; in the future, they would belong to the Xiao Clan. Xiao Caifeng watched with a smile as Meng Hao left.

Her eyes followed him as he disappeared into the distance. Who knew

how long his shadow would rest on her heart? Her gaze rested on the spot where he had disappeared; she knew inside that there was no possibility of anything happening between the two of them.

Xiao Chang'en looked at Xiao Caifeng and sighed. His body seemed even weaker in the early morning sun. He was only growing older and older.

Several days later, Meng Hao sped through the sky, flying along the border territory between the Blood Demon Sect and the Solitary Sword Sect. A frown covered his face because of the incessant yammering of the meat jelly hat. It hadn't stopped talking at all during the previous days.

"A female. Wahaha! It turned out she was a girl. Meng Hao, don't you think it's strange? Hey, why aren't you saying anything? You can't do that, it's immoral. It turns out you fought with a girl! Heavens.... You know, I'm an elder of the senior generation, with ever-changing forms. How can you treat me this way? Acting like this is very wrong, very immoral...."

Veins of blood filled Meng Hao's eyes, along with a look of despair. He really couldn't deal with this type of torment. The hat's endless chattering was enough to drive a person crazy. Meng Hao could feel his temper growing worse and worse.

But attacking the meat jelly was useless. Cursing it did nothing. It couldn't be thrown away. It was stuck to him like dog skin plaster, seemingly attached to him for life. Meng Hao couldn't think of any other alternative than to simply go insane.

He proceeded forward wearily. Suddenly, his eyes flickered as he caught sight of eight bright beams shooting toward him. They were all Cultivators of the Foundation Establishment stage. The beams of light were all the color of blood. Several of the Cultivators were maintaining a spell, within which was the indistinct image of some sort of enormous blood-colored beast. It floated above them as they proceeded forward.

Seeing these eight Cultivators, Meng Hao's eyes flashed, and he suddenly spoke to the meat jelly. "You say you have ever-changing forms? I don't believe you."

"You don't believe me!?" cried the meat jelly furiously. It seemed

incapable of accepting this. Its dignity and honor had been trampled upon!

Li Shiqi's name in Chinese is 李诗琪 lǐ shī qí – Li is a common family name. Shi means “poem.” Qi means “fine jade” ↔

# Chapter 176: Believe Your Granny

Originally Meng Hao had planned to speak placatingly, but then opted to sound scornful and disbelieving. “If you can transform into a shiny bag of holding that obviously contains a precious treasure, then I’ll believe you,” he said. He worked hard to make himself sound as antagonistic as possible.

In a rage, the meat jelly instantly transformed into a shining, golden bag of holding. It was transparent, and within could be seen a square cauldron as well as four circulating demonic swords. The four swords revolved around the cauldron, and at a single glance, it was obvious that it was a precious treasure.

Even more realistic was how the cauldron and four swords seemed to be trying to push their way out of the bag of holding, as if they wanted to escape.

“Well, what do you think...?” The voice of the meat jelly emanated out from the bag of holding.

Inside, he was surprised, but on the outside, a look of disdain covered his face. “There’s no glow!”

There was a rustling sound, and even as the words left his mouth, the bag of holding began to emit a blinding glow which shot up into the sky. The golden light shined up, instantly catching the attention of the eight Cultivators. Immediately, they flew in Meng Hao’s direction.

“Do you believe me n....?” came the voice of the meat jelly from within the bag of holding. Before it could finish speaking, Meng Hao grabbed the bag of holding and threw it toward the approaching Cultivators.

“Believe your granny!!” Meng Hao had been raised not to curse, but in this case he couldn’t help it. He shot away from the meat jelly as quickly as possible.

He had thrown the glowing, golden bag of holding away from himself with all the power he could muster from his Cultivation base. As it neared

the approaching eight Cultivators, they stared open-mouthed. They all had slightly different expressions. Some were suspicious, some were cautious, some even looked pleasantly surprised. However, each and every one reached out with outstretched arms to snatch the bag of holding.

“You tricked me! That pisses me off!” sounded out the voice of the meat jelly. Just when it was about to be grabbed by one of the Cultivators, it vanished. Then it reappeared off in the distance, directly on Meng Hao’s head. It once again transformed into a green hat.

As if that didn’t satisfy it, popping sounds rang out as one hat after another piled up on his head, over and over again, high up into the air....

Soon, the stack of hats was taller than Meng Hao’s entire person. The eight Cultivators looked on, completely dumbfounded. They had never seen something like this in their entire lives.

Meng Hao’s face grew even more unsightly. He felt like he was about to go nuts. If the meat jelly took this shape, then he would be the center of attention no matter where he went....

“Fellow Daoist with the green hats,” said one of the Cultivators coldly, a middle-aged man with a frown. “This is Blood Demon Sect territory. Outsiders are not welcome. Even less welcome are people who come here to make fools of us. Take your green hat and get the hell out of here!”

Meng Hao had just been about to leave when the words reached his ears. He suddenly stopped, turning to look at the eight Cultivators. His eyes shone fiercely. At the moment, he was in a horrific mood, and these words did not please him whatsoever.

“You still dare to turn your head back?” said the middle-aged Cultivator with a cold laugh. “In that case, why don’t you leave your eyes with me after you leave. With those green hats, you’ll be a laughingstock anyway.” With that, he and his companions shot toward Meng Hao.

“Screw off!” said Meng Hao, suddenly lifting his hand and waving his sleeve toward them. The power of his Cultivation base exploded out. A massive wind screamed out and then slammed into them.



A booming filled the air, and blood sprayed from the mouths of the eight patrolling Blood Demon Sect disciples. Their bodies trembled. A look of disbelief covered the face of the man who had taunted Meng Hao, and his pupils constricted. From what he could see, Meng Hao was at the mid Foundation Establishment stage, but his attack just now had been filled with the might like that of the late Foundation Establishment stage. Blood oozed out of his mouth as he skidded backward in retreat. When he saw the cold look in Meng Hao's eyes, his heart shook.

Realizing he had been rash, the middle-aged Cultivator said, "Fellow Daoist, this...." Even as he began to speak, however, Meng Hao's eyes shone with even more ferocious iciness.

The man's face fell. He and his companions turned into beams of prismatic light that shot away into the distance. When they were far away from Meng Hao, they finally came to a stop and exchanged glances.

"That guy is just too aggressive. Where did he come from? Elder Brother, let's report him to Master. Master will surely dispatch some people to apprehend him!"

"Correct. Elder Brother, this is Blood Demon Sect territory. Can we really allow that guy to just run amok?"

"Shut the hell up!" growled the middle-aged man, his face dark and unreadable. "He's young, and with just a single sweep of his hand, look at what he did to us. Do you really think he's just some random person? He's obviously not a Cultivator of the Solitary Sword Sect. With war brewing between our Sect and the Solitary Sword Sect, we can't afford to provoke the wrath of additional Sects! He's obviously just passing through and doesn't want to make enemies, that's why he went easy on us. All of you, shut your mouths. Forget about what happened here. There will always be friction among Cultivators like us. There's no need to report some trifling incident like this to the Sect." Having made his decision, he continued on into the distance, his fellow Cultivators in tow.

After they were some ways away, the vines on the ground beneath them that they hadn't noticed this entire time, burrowed into the earth and

disappeared.

Back in Meng Hao's location, Meng Hao stamped his foot onto the ground. The soil seethed as the dark red vines emerged to sway back and forth in front of him. Moments later, they transformed into a small, dark red fruit, which he placed into his bag of holding. Finally, he turned his attention to the hat on his head.

"You can't do that! It's wrong. If you let them go, you should trust them completely. You can't secretly dispatch something to follow them. That's wrong. That's immoral. Eee? I just remembered something. You cussed at me just now!!

"Cussing is wrong. It's immoral. My granny never did anything to offend you. Why did you have to bring her up? It's very strange. What relationship do you have with her? Unless..." Suddenly, the meat jelly's pedantic voice filled with a strange tone. "Unless the two of you...."

Meng Hao ignored it. He slapped his bag of holding to produce a set of clothing. He ripped off some strips of fabric and stuffed them into his ears. Immediately, the meat jelly's voice became quieter. But then, the meat jelly gave a dry cough. It started to talk, and this time, its voice could be heard directly inside of Meng Hao's head.

Meng Hao's expression was somewhat haggard. He stared off into nothing for a while, then finally sighed and tossed the strips of cloth away.

"Now I know why people call you Ultimate Vexation," he said. Immediately, the meat jelly began to tremble with excitement.

"Why? Why?! This name was given to me a very, very, very long time ago by an old friend. I asked him about it many times, but he would never tell me what it means." The meat jelly's full and undivided attention was now focused on Meng Hao.

Meng Hao didn't say anything. Instead, he pondered why the person who named the meat jelly wouldn't explain the meaning of the name. Then he thought of the meat jelly's long-windedness, and he shivered. He understood. By providing an answer regarding the name, it would give the meat jelly a conversation topic that would certainly last for months.

The thought of that made his scalp go numb. Anyone who had no experience dealing with the meat jelly couldn't comprehend the nature of the torment it brought. He decided to change the topic.

"With you looking like this, we really can't proceed onward," said Meng Hao. "Is there any way you can take some form other than a pile of hats?" He was careful in his wording, fearful of agitating the thing. He could only imagine what it would look like if it decided to become a mountain of green hats perched on top of his head. What would happen then?

His tone was non-argumentative, but inside, his heart was filled with helplessness. He thought of the Blood Mastiff, and suddenly missed it terribly. Unfortunately, it was sleeping now.

Actually, Meng Hao's words seemed to excite the meat jelly. "Eee? If I'm not a hat, then what shape should I take?" Meng Hao was used to this, so he didn't say anything at first. He sat cross-legged within the mountain forest and retrieved the Time-refining jade page. He cast his Spiritual Sense into it and began to study the contents.

Some time passed, and then Meng Hao's eyes glittered. He began to mutter to himself. "Time of Spring and Autumn requires a Spring tree and the frost of Autumn. The fire of mid-Winter, the spirit of Summer. Refine the four seasons, fuse with the Cultivation base. Refine the four seasons again to produce a small sword.

"This sword must be carefully nurtured. With enlightenment of Time, the veins of a hundred years can fill the sword. After the hundred years, a thousand years will pass, and it will take shape. In ten thousand years, it will appear to shake heaven and earth, the first Sword of Time." Meng Hao frowned as he gazed at the jade page. The sword contained no small might, but the time involved in its creation seemed too vast.

"Han Bei is really focused on this sword, so it can't really take that much time, can it...? There must be other methods that can be used to speed up the appearance of the sword." Lost in thought, Meng Hao thought to the third jade page that the meat jelly had swallowed, as well as the first jade page, which had been sucked back into the circular cauldron.

“The answer must be on the third page. Too bad this damned meat jelly ate it.” Meng Hao lifted his head and looked at the meat jelly. About an hour had passed since he began studying the Time refining information. Of course, the meat jelly had been talking the entire time.

“What do I change into? What do I change into? What do I change into?” It had flown off of Meng Hao’s head and was now hopping back and forth in front of him. It looked very excited.

“Can you change into that jade page you swallowed?” Meng Hao said suddenly.

“Huh? Ok...” It agreed, and then immediately changed its mind. “Eee? Wait a second. What are you trying to pull? No way! It’s mine. You’re not getting your hands on it.”

# Chapter 177: Using its Strength

Meng Hao's eyes narrowed when he heard the words.

"Could it be that the things it swallows don't get digested, but are just collected?"

"Trying to fool me? Quit dreaming. Hmph." The meat jelly's tone became sagely, "Child, you've walked too far down the path of evil. Repent and be saved."

"Change into whatever it was that left the most profound impression on you," Meng Hao said blithely. He was still thinking about what the meat jelly had said just now, and what it meant. He had to figure out a way to trick the meat jelly into coughing up the jade page.

"The most profound impression? There's no need to even think about it. The thing which had the most profound effect on me in my entire life is this!!" The meat jelly seemed to be gnashing its teeth. There was a popping sound, and suddenly it transformed into....

A brightly colored parrot! It was about half the size of his arm, glistening as if it were covered with rainwater. It was somewhat emaciated, with a curved beak and triangular eyes. It had a somewhat perverted demeanor, and seemed to be filled with an immoral air.

It stood there in front of Meng Hao, looking at him with its perverted, triangular eyes. It lowered its head and pecked a few times at its body.

Meng Hao gaped at the parrot. In his entire life, he had never seen such a perverted looking bird. Its triangular eyes and the brightly colored feathers which covered its body were especially strange.

The parrot coughed dryly, looking at Meng Hao out of the corner of its eye.

"This is what left the most profound impression on me: that damned bird. In my last life, I just wasn't able to get it to give in and convert. In this life, I will definitely convert it! That immoral, perverted creature who likes things with fur and feathers!!" The meat jelly sounded like it was

gnashing its teeth. Its appearance and words just now instantly made this form seem even more lifelike.

Seeing the parrot and hearing the words caused Meng Hao to take a deep breath. He thought back to the day he had almost put on the blood-colored mask, and had heard a bird cry come from the copper mirror.

He thought about how fervently the copper mirror would attack furred creatures. His mind spun with various images. He didn't really understand. Just what was this bird that the meat jelly kept talking about...?

Meng Hao hesitated for a moment before retrieving the copper mirror from his bag of the Cosmos. "You're talking about this?" he asked. The instant it appeared, the meat jelly parrot let out a squawk. Wings fluttering, it shot forward and grabbed the copper mirror in its claws and began to viciously peck at it.

"Dammit! Yes, this is it. I can sense its Qi inside. I'll peck you to death, you damned mass-murdering bird! Peck you! Peck you...!" The meat jelly parrot seemed to have gone crazy. Its feathers stood on end as it squawked and pecked at the copper mirror.

Meng Hao watched on in a daze. He recalled the time he had acquired the mirror, and then when he had discovered its ability. From the very beginning, he had always wondered about its fantastical nature, but had never discovered any clues.

Meng Hao felt like he was going to be quickly driven insane by the meat jelly parrot. It was squawking madly and radiated a look of hatred. Meng Hao himself felt like venting a bit. He suddenly had an intense desire to meet the parrot that resided within the copper mirror.

"The parrot must be incredibly extraordinary to be able to make the meat jelly so angry. Maybe when it comes out, it can take care of the meat jelly for me." Meng Hao's eyes glittered as he suddenly reached an understanding. "Didn't the meat jelly say earlier that when I reach Core Formation, the parrot can come out? Perhaps... it's like the mastiff, a type of Weapon Spirit!"

"Why don't you fight back? Hmm?" The meat jelly parrot blustered as it

pecked at the mirror. "I won't let you off this time, I'm going to convert you! Hahaha! You can't come out. You can't come out! I can piss you off as much as I want and you can't come out." The meat jelly quivered with excitement. However, it was at this point that the mirror suddenly flickered, and the meat jelly let out a cry. It released its claws and flew away. The copper mirror flew after it, repeatedly sending out invisible attack rays.

Meng Hao watched on contentedly, doing nothing to stop the copper mirror. However, it quickly became apparent that the meat jelly wasn't being hurt at all. He flicked his sleeve, returning the copper mirror to the bag of the Cosmos.

The meat jelly parrot flapped its wings as it flew back over and landed on Meng Hao's shoulder. It began to chatter into his ear like usual.

At least this form looked better than a stack of hats. Meng Hao's desire to reach Core Formation was now even more intense. He took a deep breath. Ignoring the prattle of the meat jelly, he flew into the air and shot off toward the horizon.

"The poison within me is a big problem," he thought. "I really need to figure a way to infiltrate the Violet Fate Sect and see if I can find a way to become Grandmaster Pill Demon's disciple. Then I can get rid of the poison once and for all." His eyes glittered as he proceeded onward. He had considered this the last time he was in a city controlled by the Violet Fate Sect. The Spring and Autumn tree could only alleviate the symptoms of the poison and buy him some time.

The only way to truly dispel the poison was to get into the Violet Fate Sect.

"Besides, if I want to form a Perfect Gold Core, I first need to have a Violet Core. To form a Violet Core requires a suitable technique. That technique is none other than the Violet Fate Sect's Violet Qi from the East!" Meng Hao frowned. It was a good idea, but he couldn't think of any way to infiltrate the Violet Fate Sect. He had offended too many people there. There was Wu Dingqiu and Chu Yuyan, as well as the disciples he

had met in the State of Zhao, who were surely members of the Inner Sect by now.

“I need to switch identities. I need a way to become someone else.” He sighed. Obviously it was all a flight of fancy that should just be forgotten. Suddenly, his expression changed. He looked at the bag of the Cosmos, and his eyes shined with intelligence.

“The mask.... If I had an appearance-changing mask, then I could do it. As for a mask...I do have one! But who knows if the mask has that power? Furthermore, my Cultivation base needs to be at Core Formation before I can use it. Also, what if the mask just doesn’t work that way....” He slowly turned his head to look at the chattering parrot on his shoulder. His eyes glittered.

“What are you looking at me like that for?” said the meat jelly parrot with surprise, staring at him.

Meng Hao ignored it. He flew down to the ground and sat cross-legged. He smacked the bag of the Cosmos and retrieved the blood-colored mask.

As soon as the meat jelly saw the mask, its eyes went wide and it flapped its wings violently, flying around Meng Hao in a circle and letting out raucous squawks.

“What’s that? What’s that? Heavens! What is that evil thing? Child, you’ve trodden too far down the path of wickedness. Fear not, I can pull you back. I will convert you. Eeeeeee? What’s that inside? Why am I seeing an old man? Waaah! This old man looks so miserable. Child, you can’t do this. It’s wrong. It’s immoral. Eee? This old guy has performed possession! Old man, that’s immoral. That’s wrong....”

Meng Hao poured Spiritual Sense into the mask and was immediately able to see the blood-red form of the mastiff. It lay there sleeping, its Qi majestic and boundless and growing even stronger. Meng Hao looked at it, and his expression grew soft.

“Hurry up and awaken...” he said with Spiritual Sense. The mastiff’s body twitched, and warmth emanated from it, a reply of sorts. Meng Hao’s smile grew warmer, and he thought back to everything that had happened



during the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament.

“I’m waiting for you to wake up,” said Meng Hao softly. His eyes flashed as they fell upon the flag with three streamers. He was fully aware that his Cultivation base was not high enough to use the flag. He could only pour some Spiritual Sense into it and brand it to himself.

“Core Formation.... If I can become a Core Formation expert, then I should be able to use this flag....”

Last, Meng Hao touched the Li Clan Patriarch with his Spiritual Sense. He sat recoiled in the corner, his body illusory and transparent, and his face wan and sallow. It seemed as if at any moment he might dissipate into nothing.

As Meng Hao looked at him, he raised his head and glared back. His gaze was as fierce as ever, sinister to the extreme.

“There’s a question I can’t stop thinking about,” said Meng Hao calmly. “Why did you help Li Daoyi? The first time I saw you was in the sixth matrix, and you were a statue. The second time I saw you, you had become Li Daoyi’s Blood Divinity. Why?”

The Li Clan Patriarch laughed coldly, refusing to respond.

“It turns out you possessed the Blood Divinity. That makes me curious. Before possessing the Blood Divinity... who were you!?” His voice was as calm as ever. However, when the Li Clan Patriarch heard his words, his heart shook. His identity was his biggest secret, and no one had any clue about it. Even Meng Hao could only speculate about his relationship to Li Daoyi. Any details would be difficult to ascertain.

The Li Clan Patriarch laughed disdainfully. “You want to know? Beg me for a year, then maybe I’ll think about it.” He didn’t care about anything, not even death. After facing the loneliness of the Blood Immortal Legacy zone for four thousand years, he had incredible strength of will. Even Meng Hao’s previous threatening methods couldn’t really affect him now.

Meng Hao’s expression was the same as ever. He glanced one last time at the weak form of the Li Clan Patriarch, and then narrowed his eyes and

retracted his Spiritual Sense. He gazed at the surface of the blood-colored mask, and then looked at the meat jelly.

“You like to convert people, right?” asked Meng Hao.

“No,” the meat jelly responded solemnly, “I don’t like to convert people, I like to persuade them. Understand? Persuade.”

Meng Hao sighed. “The old man in this mask lived a life of extreme wickedness. He’s performed the most evil of acts and is completely corrupted by immorality. He loves to bully the weak, and is extremely vile in all ways. I captured him and put him in here out of mercy, because I wanted to admonish him. However, his magic is just too powerful. I just can’t influence him...” Before he could even finish talking, the meat jelly parrot’s eyes grew wide and it began to fume.

“Do you dare!? This type of person should only be converted by me! I hate nothing more than evildoers! I must convert him!” It suddenly looked extremely excited at the prospect of converting a bad guy such as this. Without waiting for a response from Meng Hao, its body flashed and it entered the blood-colored mask.

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# Chapter 178: An Old Friend

As soon as it entered the mask, the meat jelly cried out in alarm.

“Th-th-that’s ... a Yellow Springs Nine Burials Flag!! It already has three streamers! Evil! Profound evil!” Looking very stern, the meat jelly approached the gaping Li Patriarch. “Old man, it turns out you are evil incarnate! In the name of Justice, I shall convert you! You can’t be like this, it’s immoral. You won’t meet a good end this way....”

Meng Hao coughed lightly and then put the mask away. He let out a deep sigh, and his eyes glittered sharply.

“Yellow Springs Nine Burials Flag?” Lost in thought, Meng Hao was just about to fly out of the concealment of the forest, when he stopped. He hid his Cultivation base and narrowed his eyes.

His Cultivation base was at the mid Foundation Establishment stage, which meant that he could contend with Dao Children. However, he had no reason to do so. This area was the border region between the Blood Demon Sect and the Solitary Sword Sect. He must be very cautious, and not get carried away. He resolved to not forget this.

After the space of about ten breaths had passed, several colorful beams of light appeared in the sky overhead. Ten Cultivators appeared, each and every one standing on a flying sword. They all wore identical outfits, and looked very impressive and dignified. Their passage sent a roaring sound into the air.

Of the ten people, the three in the front were the most conspicuous. They wore robes of interlocking black and white. Sheathed swords were strapped to their backs, and the sword auras beneath their feet shined brightly, seemingly capable of slicing effortlessly through anything.

One of the three was a stately looking man of about forty years of age. He was at the late Foundation Establishment stage, and as he flew, his black hair whipped around him, interspersed with occasional strands of white hair.

Behind him was a young man of about thirty years of age with thin lips and a harsh expression. He had curved eyes like a red phoenix that radiated coldness. He was incredibly good looking, but seemed cold-blooded in nature. The sword under his feet issued a frigid pressure. He was at the mid Foundation Establishment stage, and seemed to be the picture of imposing power.

The last person appeared to be about twenty-seven or twenty-eight. His features were ordinary, but he radiated an air of righteousness. He was only at the early Foundation Establishment stage, but his eyes glowed brightly. He seemed to be filled with a powerful aura.

When Meng Hao caught sight of him, his mind flooded with memories. This man filled with righteousness was none other than... Meng Hao's Elder Brother from the Reliance Sect, who had been taken away by the Solitary Sword Sect.

Years had passed. Yet here, right in front of him, was Chen Fan. He thought back to the day they had parted, and it seemed like a very, very long time ago. The Reliance Sect was no more, and the State of Zhao was gone. Meng Hao wondered if Chen Fan was still the same person he had been before. 1

He was silent as he observed the group of people. They were all disciples of the number one Sect in the Southern Domain, the Solitary Sword Sect. It wasn't anything remarkable for the Solitary Sword Sect to appear here. After all, this area was a region of contention between the Blood Demon Sect and the Solitary Sword Sect.

Meng Hao knew about the constant friction between the two great Sects, as well as the occasional skirmishes that occurred.

Just as the group of people was about to disappear in the distance, Meng Hao's expression flickered, and he looked back up into the sky.

Soon, he caught sight of ten beams of blood-red light whistling through the air. They were moving at top speed, kicking up a wind that buffeted the mountain forest below. Above the group of ten people were a handful of enormous creatures, flying along with them.

These ten Cultivators had grim expressions, filled with death. Killing intent circled around them and up to the beasts above them, who seemed to be feeding on it. The beasts roared and howled.

These, of course, were disciples of the Blood Demon Sect. Their speed was incredible as they passed over Meng Hao. From the direction they were heading, it seemed they were pursuing the Solitary Sword Sect Cultivators.

As they disappeared over the horizon, Meng Hao emerged from the forest. Muttering to himself, he looked at the direction the Cultivators from the two Sects had gone. Instead of flying after them, he stayed down into the cover of the trees to follow.

Meng Hao sped through the trees for the time it takes two incense sticks to burn. It was then that he heard the sounds of explosions ringing out. He increased his speed, and before long, caught sight of the Solitary Sword Sect and the Blood Demon Sect Cultivators locked in fierce magical combat. Booms echoed out, and ripples of magic spread out through the air.

To the Solitary Sword Sect people, a single sword was an instrument of death, incomparably sharp. As for the Blood Demon Sect people, their magic was ever-changing. Surprisingly, it wasn't dominated by the color of blood; rather, they used an endless stream of techniques. The phantom beasts they controlled possessed extraordinary strength. There were only three of them, but they charged about violently, making them impossible to approach.

There were no Core Formation experts in the two groups of people. The strongest among them was of the False Core stage. The rest were all of Foundation Establishment. They fought back and forth wildly, surrounded by a bloody glow. Meng Hao watched as a few among them perished. At the moment, the Blood Demon Sect seemed to have the upper hand. Suddenly, though, the eyes of the False Core Cultivator from the Solitary Sword Sect flickered with a cold light.

"Solitary Sword Spell!" he shouted. The Solitary Sword Sect disciples,

including Chen Fan, flew toward him. Their swords glittered shockingly. In the blink of an eye, the sword merged together to form a single enormous sword, three hundred meters in length. The massive sword shot toward the three phantom beasts.

An explosion rang out in all directions. The phantom beasts trembled and roared, and then one by one, disintegrated into nothing. The massive sword then transformed into hundreds of glowing sword beams, which shot toward the remaining Blood Demon Sect disciples, as well as... toward the ground, where Meng Hao stood.

Meng Hao frowned, and then leaped up into the air. He waved his right hand, causing a gale force wind to spring up. The approaching sword beams instantly broke apart into pieces.

Meng Hao's appearance, and his quick dispatching of the sword beams, immediately attracted the attention of the surrounding Solitary Sword Cultivators. This was especially so of the harsh-looking young man of the mid Foundation Establishment stage, whose eyes radiated iciness. The sword beams that had shot toward Meng Hao just now had been under his control.

"This Blood Demon Sect villain harbors evil designs," said the young man coolly. "Junior Brothers, hear my command. Snuff him out!" He seemed disinclined to even verify Meng Hao's identity. His appearance here was enough for the young man to pass judgement on him.

As soon as the words came out of his mouth, the forty-year-old late Foundation Establishment Cultivator frowned. However, he didn't intervene. The eyes of the surrounding Cultivators flickered with coldness as they charged toward Meng Hao.

At this moment, however, Chen Fan caught sight of Meng Hao. After a moment passed, his eyes filled with joy.

"Stop!" he cried, rushing forward with all the speed of the early Foundation Establishment stage. He passed the others, flying directly up to Meng Hao. "This is my Junior Brother!" he cried excitedly. "Everyone stop!"

His expression was one of intense happiness, almost trance-like, as he

gazed at Meng Hao and recalled the past.

Meng Hao looked at Chen Fan and smiled. Chen Fan's expression and words were filled with sincerity, and now Meng Hao was certain... he hadn't changed. He was the same person he had been seven or eight years ago.

Meng Hao took a deep breath and then said, "Greetings, Elder Brother." He clasped hands and bowed deeply.

Chen Fan laughed. He looked a bit different than he had seven or eight years ago, but his personality was the same. He stepped forward and embraced Meng Hao.

"Junior Brother Chen," said the harsh-looking young man with a hypocritical smile. "How come I've never seen this Junior Brother of yours? I didn't know the Solitary Sword Sect had a disciple such as this." His voice was filled with sinister accusation.

Chen Fan frowned, standing protectively in front of Meng Hao. "Elder Brother Zhou, he's not a Solitary Sword Sect disciple. He's my Junior Brother from when I was in the Reliance Sect."

Meng Hao didn't say anything, and his expression was the same as ever. He wanted to see how Chen Fan would handle the situation.

"So he's a disciple from a tiny, backwater Sect," said Zhou, his voice sinister and yet leisurely. "He would normally be inconsequential. Yet here he is spying on us. He must take responsibility!"

The surrounding Solitary Sword Sect disciples exchanged glances, then moved backward silently. It seems this was not the first time they had seen conflict erupt between Zhou and Chen Fan.

The middle-aged False Core Cultivator sighed, looking at the two of them with an annoyed expression, and then glancing down at Meng Hao.

"Take responsibility?" said Chen Fan coolly. His eyes were cold as he stood there in front of Meng Hao. "Zhou Shanyue 2, I would very much like to know exactly how you expect my Junior Brother to take responsibility? With me here, which one of you dares to cause problems

for him!?” He slapped his bag of holding, and a small black blade appeared, about the size of a hand. It flew up to circle around his head.

Meng Hao’s expression changed to one of shock the instant he saw the blade appear. So did the faces of the surrounding Cultivators. The False Core stage man gasped.

Zhou Shanyue’s face immediately grew extremely unsightly. A look of jealousy filled his eyes as he glared at Chen Fan. His heart, however, filled with dread.

The blade emanated the fearsome power of Core Formation!

“Zhou Shanyue, I’m waiting for your response,” said Chen Fan calmly.

TL Notes:

1. There were a handful of chapters in which Chen Fan appeared. Perhaps the most relevant is Chapter 34: Fame from 1,000 Years Ago, in which he befriends Meng Hao ↩

2. Zhou Shanyue’s name in Chinese is 周山岳 zhōu shān yuè – Zhou is a common family name. Shan means “mountain.” Yue also means “mountain” ↩



# Chapter 179: Sect Brothers

“That’s my father’s flying dagger!” said Zhou Shanyue with a cold snort, staring at the black blade hovering around Chen Fan’s head.

“It’s a gift from my Master,” replied Chen Fan, his expression cold. Immediately, Zhou Shanyue’s expression darkened. He flicked his sleeve and began to move toward Chen Fan.

“To take responsibility is simple,” he said as he strode forward. “I want both of his eyes. Let’s see if you dare to try to kill me. If you do, you have my respect. But how will you explain that to your Master, my father?!”

Meng Hao’s expression was the same as always. He watched calmly as the scene unfolded. In front of him, Chen Fan gazed coldly at the approaching Zhou Shanyue. He lifted his right hand, and the flying dagger immediately began to glow.

Everything seemed ready to dissolve into chaos. Zhou Shanyue proceeded forward, a savage expression covering his face.

“I can’t believe that you would dare to attack me over an outsider!”

“To you, he’s an outsider, but to me, he’s a Junior Brother.” Chen Fan waved his hand, and the flying dagger shot toward Zhou Shanyue.

Zhou Shanyue’s hair stood on end, and he suddenly stopped moving. The black dagger had come to a stop right in front of his face.

“Don’t push me, Zhou Shanyue,” Chen Fan said softly.

Meng Hao was just about to take a step forward when the False Core stage Cultivator suddenly said, “Just what do you two think you’re doing?! Zhou Shanyue, stand down! Chen Fan, if this is your Junior Brother from your former Sect, then you’ll need to vouch for him. You will be responsible for all his future mistakes.” The words obviously contained a threat. While it seemed on the surface that he was trying to smooth over the situation, he was actually making a small matter into a bigger one.

Meng Hao was quite experienced, so obviously he understood what was being said. He laughed coldly.

“My affairs have nothing to do with my Elder Brother,” he said. “If you don’t take your words back voluntarily, your excellency, then I’ll be forced to make you take them back.” His voice was ice cold. When the middle-aged man heard them, his eyes grew icy and he stared back at Meng Hao.

Chen Fan, of course, had never imagined that Meng Hao would dare to speak. Without another word, he flashed an incantation sign, and the flying dagger re-appeared at his side.

“Chen Fan, it’s not that I didn’t try to give you some face. Your Junior Brother here needs to be taught a lesson.” With a grim smile, the middle-aged man flicked his sleeve and began to move toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao’s expression was the same as ever. His Cultivation base had four Dao Pillars. He could contend with the late Foundation Establishment stage and could even stand up to Dao Children with Flawless Foundations. There was no need to even mention this middle-aged man who clearly had a Cracked Foundation at best.

Meng Hao could slay him with ease.

Granted, the man was a fellow Disciple of Elder Brother Chen. However, Meng Hao couldn’t allow people to level threats against him that could affect Elder Brother Chen later. That was why he had tried to separate himself from Chen Fan.

The surrounding Solitary Sword Sect disciples watched on with cold smiles, eyeing Meng Hao with looks of disdain. They obviously thought Meng Hao was being arrogant and conceited to think he could stand up to someone who had completed the great circle of Foundation Establishment.

Various thoughts ran through the minds of the surrounding disciples.

“I never imagined Elder Brother Chen would make friends with someone who so easily overestimates himself.”

“He’s relying on Elder Brother Chen’s presence, like a fox exploiting the might of a tiger.” 1

“He’s looking to die!”

A sinister smile appeared on Zhou Shanyue's face. He moved backward a few paces, contentedly watching the commotion.

Meng Hao looked as calm as ever as the middle-aged man raced forward. A slight smile appeared on his face, and he was about to step forward, when Chen Fan held his arm in front of him.

"Elder Brother Li, my Junior Brother is young and insensible. Please give me some more face, and don't take offense. Let's just drop the matter." Having said this, he clasped Meng Hao's shoulder and gazed at him warmly. "Listen to Elder Brother," he said. When the four words entered Meng Hao's ears, they were filled with a gentle warmth that he hadn't experienced in a very long time. He looked into Chen Fan's eyes and then nodded.

The man named Li stopped in his tracks, glaring coldly at Meng Hao for a moment, and then looking back at Chen Fan. Slowly, his face relaxed. A long moment passed, and then he said, "You need to help your Junior Brother learn not stop overestimating himself. If he doesn't, he'll end up a mutilated corpse sooner or later." He flicked his sleeve and began to leave. Zhou Shanyue smiled mockingly and followed, along with the other Solitary Sword Disciples.

"We'll wait for you up ahead," came the voice of Li. "You have the time it takes an incense stick to burn to catch up with your Junior Brother."

As they disappeared into the distance, Meng Hao looked hesitantly at Chen Fan.

"Elder Brother, I..."

"You don't need to say anything," said Chen Fan, his face covered with a wide smile. He embraced him warmly again.

Laughing happily, Chen Fan looked Meng Hao over, eyes filled with excitement because of their reunion. "You've grown up big and strong, I see! Haha! You're not the little scholar you used to be."

In a voice as earnest as it had always been, he grabbed Meng Hao's arm and said, "Can you believe it? Here we are, fellow Brothers who've run into

each other yet again in the Southern Domain. We have to celebrate! Come come, tell your Elder Brother what you've been up to these past years. A while back, I heard that the State of Zhao disappeared! Ai...." He didn't even give Meng Hao a chance to respond.

His personality had always been like this. He talked and talked, and before long, enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn. The entire time, Meng Hao didn't have a chance to even say a single sentence. It was just like it had been back in the Reliance Sect.

Chen Fan was definitely long-winded, but even were he more so, Meng Hao wouldn't mind. Meng Hao's heart filled with warmth as he realized that everything Chen Fan was saying was out of concern for him. He was considerate, excited, and happy.

"That fatty Li Fugui, do you remember him? He used to follow you around all the time. Well, he's a pretty important person in the Golden Frost Sect now. Last time I went with Master to pay a visit to the Golden Frost Sect, I saw him swaggering around. He's definitely a darling of the Sect. If anyone dared to mess with him, a crowd of Golden Frost Sect disciples would instantly rush to help him....

"Junior Sister Xu is in sore straits, though. The only thing I could do was ask some people I know in the Black Sieve Sect to watch out for her. She's been stuck at the ninth level of Qi Condensation for years now. She needs a Foundation Establishment Pill. In the past years, I've performed some meritorious services for the Sect. I think it won't be long before I can get a Foundation Establishment Pill from Master to send to her.

"Oh, and then there's Wang Tengfei.... You'd best not provoke him again, he has an impressive amount of power backing him. Oh, right. You wouldn't believe the latest gossip. Rumor has it that his fiancée, Chu Yuyan from the Violet Fate Sect, is intimately involved with some stranger.

"The news is out, and all the Sects have heard about it. There was an eyewitness who saw Chu Yuyan wearing the clothing of some other man. There was obvious something shady was going on.... Who do you think that guy could be? Whoever he is, I sure admire him. He was able to steal

Chu Yuyan right from under Wang Tengfei's nose....” Meng Hao wasn't able to get a word in edgewise. When the topic of Chu Yuyan came up, a strange expression suddenly appeared on his face.

“So,” he thought, “that Zhou Daya fellow did exactly as I predicted and immediately began to spread rumors....” He gave a dry cough, not admitting to anything. Instead, he said, “Wow, that guy really is amazing. I hope I have a chance to meet him some day and maybe be friends.” His face was covered with an expression of admiration similar to Chen Fan's.

About this time, the clear sound of a sword could be heard ringing out in the air. Meng Hao looked up to see a Solitary Sword Sect disciple off in the distance, clearly urging them to hurry up.

Taking advantage in the break in Chen Fan's dialogue, Meng Hao scratched his head and said, “Elder Brother, maybe you should....” Before he could finish, he was submerged by more words from Chen Fan.

“Little Junior Brother, have you found a suitable beloved yet?” he said suddenly.

“Uh....” Meng Hao stared in shock. Chen Fan's question seemed to have come completely out of the blue. Before he could respond, Chen Fan nodded.

“Oh, I understand. You're still hung up on Elder Sister Xu. Junior Brother, listen to me carefully. There are a lot of female Cultivators in the Southern Domain, but there are four who are considered to be the most dazzling.

“Chu Yuyan is one of them, but you might as well forget about her. She belongs to Wang Tengfei and that other mysterious guy. However, the other three are really a match for your good looks and Cultivation base.” Chen Fan's eyes shined brightly as he looked at Meng Hao. He sounded almost like a match-maker.

This topic completely exceeded Meng Hao's powers of prediction. He stared blankly at Elder Brother Chen. How could he have imagined that after all these years, Elder Brother Chen would suddenly have taken up this new interest? Meng Hao cleared his throat a few times. “Elder

Brother, I....”

“Don’t be so shy! Look, your Elder Brother has a lot of experience. There may be some things you don’t understand about this kind of thing, but don’t worry. I’ll take care of everything. There’s still plenty of time, plenty of time.”

“Er... plenty of time, plenty of time....” Beads of sweat broke out on Meng Hao’s forehead.

“Alright, you come with me to the Solitary Sword Sect. When we get there, the two of us can have a proper reunion.” Not even giving Meng Hao a chance to refuse, Chen Fan grabbed him and made to leave.

“Elder Brother, this....”

“Listen to your Elder Brother, okay? Besides, pretty soon one of the three great Clans, the Song Clan, is going to have a big get-together. They’ve invited Chosen and Dao Children from all over the Southern Domain. I’m going, so why don’t you come along? It will be a good chance to meet some of the current generation of Chosen from the Southern Domain. You just stick with me, and I’ll arrange everything.

“The State of Zhao is gone, and the Reliance Sect is no more. Throughout all these years, what I’ve worried about most is you! A few years ago, I sent someone with a message to find you, but by that time the State of Zhao had disappeared, and I feared that you had been killed.

“Let’s not bring that up. Little Junior Brother, even now, what concerns me most is still you.” He looked at Meng Hao earnestly. “You’re on your own, without a Sect! That won’t do. You listen to your Elder Brother, okay?”

Meng Hao’s heart filled with warmth that spread out throughout his whole body. Unable to make himself refuse Chen Fan, he slowly nodded his head.

TL Notes:

1. The idiom of the fox and the tiger is a very common Chinese expression which means to bully others by flaunting ones powerful

connections ↩

# Chapter 180: Shan Ling

Chen Fan looked at Meng Hao and laughed heartily. Hearts filled with happiness, he and Meng Hao transformed into beams of prismatic light that shot off toward the other Solitary Sword Sect disciples.

When the man named Li saw Meng Hao approaching with Chen Fan, he frowned.

“My Junior Brother is acquainted with my Master and wishes to visit him,” said Chen Fan coolly in explanation. “He will accompany us back to the Sect.”

The man named Li said nothing. He simply turned and transformed into a colorful beam that shot up into the sky.

“Little Junior Brother, after we get to the Sect, I’ll go implore Master to take you as a disciple. Then we can be fellow Brothers of the Solitary Sword Sect. It shouldn’t be a very big deal. I’ve never asked anything of Master, so there’s an eighty to ninety percent chance he’ll agree. Of course, I expect he’ll only accept you as a novice disciple. However, his Cultivation Base is at the Nascent Soul stage, so being one of his novice disciples is still a high position within the Solitary Sword Sect.” It seemed Chen Fan already had Meng Hao’s future planned out meticulously.

Meng Hao hesitated for a moment, and then said, “Elder Brother, for the moment, I don’t think that’s necessary. I actually have some matters I need to take care of.”

“Little Junior Brother!” said Chen Fan, his expression suddenly very solemn. “I understand that you don’t want to join another Sect. I felt the same way back then. I only wanted to be a member of a single Sect for my entire life. However... we are Cultivators. Our Sect is the foundation of everything, especially in the Southern Domain. Anyone who is not a member of a Sect is a rogue Cultivator. Regardless of Cultivation base level, rogue Cultivators make progress only with great difficulty. Years can be wasted, and the results can be in vain.

“You need to listen to me in this matter. The Solitary Sword Sect is the



number one Sect in the Southern Domain. It's Dao Reserves are incredibly profound. It's a place where both of us can grow up."

Meng Hao didn't respond.

As they traveled, Chen Fan continued to give him advice, all the way until afternoon of the next day. Eventually, the Solitary Sword Sect's main gate appeared up ahead. Finally, Meng Hao nodded.

Chen Fan's smile grew wider as he gazed at Meng Hao with the kind warmth of a member of the elder generation looking at a junior. Although he wasn't very much older than Meng Hao, in his eyes, Meng Hao was still that young scholar who had just joined the Sect.

The Solitary Sword Sect was comprised of an enormous mountain, visible from far off in the distance. This mountain was the number one mountain in the entire Southern Domain, a hundred times larger than any other mountain.

The name of this mountain was... Solitary Dao Mountain!

Floating above it in the sky was another mountain that seemed to be a mirror image of it. From a distance, they made an outline like that of an hourglass. Anyone who caught sight of it for the first time would surely be shocked.

The name of the second mountain was... Solitary Sword Mountain!

The mountains were so large that it was almost impossible to look from one end to the other in a single glance. Meng Hao had never seen mountains as large as this in his entire life. He couldn't help but tremble inwardly at the sight of them.

If it were only these two mountains, then it wouldn't be a very big deal. But... in the center the two mountains was a massive sword, piercing through them into the ground!

The hilt of the sword protruded above the mountains and stretched up into the sky.

Boundless rays of morning sunlight filled the area, giving it a truly

celestial feeling.

Meng Hao took a deep breath. Having laid eyes on the Black Sieve Sect and the Solitary Sword Sect, he had now seen two of the great Sects of the Southern Domain. The Black Sieve Sect was undeniably influential. The dread caused by their power would cause anyone to bow before them.

However, the Solitary Sword Sect's sheer, raw might didn't cause others to bow before them, but to fear them!

"I wonder what the other great Sects look like..." thought Meng Hao to himself as he gazed at the Solitary Sword Sect.

The group of people flew along quickly. As they approached Solitary Dao Mountain, they reached an area that was protected by a beautiful field of colorful light. Up ahead, the man named Li looked back coldly at Meng Hao and then gave a cold snort. With that, he disappeared into the light.

Meng Hao watched coolly as he left. In his estimation, the man was someone who couldn't really see to the heart of things. If Chen Fan hadn't stopped him earlier, the man would either have been injured or killed. It all would have depended on Meng Hao's mood.

"Don't worry," said Chen Fan, clearly worried for Meng Hao. "Once Master accepts you as a novice disciple, then Elder Brother Li won't dare to bother you." He gave a comforting smile, and then pulled Meng Hao in through the colorful field of light. He pulled out a glowing jade slip. The light swirled up around the two of them. It flickered, and then they disappeared.

When they reappeared, they were at the foot of Solitary Dao Mountain. The air was filled with the scent of blooming flowers and the sounds of birds singing. Gurgling streams could be seen. There were quite a few Solitary Sword Sect disciples going to and fro. When they saw Chen Fan, each and every one gave him respectful salutes.

Chen Fan led Meng Hao to the courtyard of a house. "Little Junior Brother," he said, "you wait for me here. I'm going to go pay my respects to the Elders. After that, I'll go look for Master. I probably won't return until after nightfall. You rest a bit here, or go walk around if you'd like. Don't go

too far, though. When I get back, we can stay up all night chatting.” He clasped Meng Hao’s shoulder, and then turned and flew off in a beam of colorful light.

Meng Hao watched him depart, then looked around at his surroundings. He opened the gate of the courtyard and entered the house. It was decorated tastefully, although not extravagantly. Everything emanated refinement. This was especially true of the vast collection of scrolls. Meng Hao selected one of the ancient texts and sat down cross-legged to examine it.

After some time passed, he put the ancient scroll down, and a thoughtful look gleamed in his eyes.

“Maybe I should join the Solitary Sword Sect...” he thought, his brow furrowed. It wasn’t his first choice. However, the Black Sieve Sect surely wouldn’t just let go the matter of the meat jelly. Entering the Solitary Sword Sect might not be a bad choice.

His eyes glittered stubbornly at the thought of the Violet Fate Sect. Dispelling his poison wasn’t the only reason he wished to do so. “I’m still inclined toward the Violet Fate Sect,” he thought. “I really want to learn Violet Qi from the East...” With that technique, he could form a Violet Core, which was the pinnacle of Core Formation.

“Furthermore, I need to study pill concocting. I can’t rely on others to do it for me every time I need a pill concocted. That’s especially true of the Perfect Core Pill....” Meng Hao sat there for some time lost in thought. Soon, evening began to fall. Sunlight streamed in from outside. Meng Hao took a deep breath and, seeing that Chen Fan hadn’t returned, decided to step outside of the house for a bit to look at Solitary Dao Mountain.

The setting sun shone onto the mountain, giving it a somewhat hazy appearance. Mist began to rise up around the mountain, and as Meng Hao looked closer, his eyes narrowed.

He suddenly caught sight of a woman wearing a blue-green garment, floating down a path on Solitary Dao Mountain.

The appearance of this woman made the haziness of the surroundings

suddenly seem clear. The sound of people dropping to their knees and prostrating themselves to her could be heard.

“It’s Elder Sister Shan Ling.” 1

“It’s really Elder Sister Shan Ling. I’ve heard that on the ninth day of every month, at dusk, she descends the mountain to collect dewdrops...”

“Greetings, Elder Sister Shan Ling.”

The sound of voices drifted down to Meng Hao. He watched as the woman slowly floated down the mountain, and his heart trembled as suddenly, the voice of the Demon Sealing Jade sounded out in his head.

“A stone of the Ninth Mountain descended and became a new mountain (山.) The mountain (山) has a spirit (灵,) and the spirit (灵) is demonic. Its will is not of this world. If you encounter it... allow it to transform magically if it is good. Seal and exterminate it if it is violent. Make your choice after careful consideration.”

The sound echoed out in Meng Hao’s mind. He stood there silently for a moment recovering his composure. He was used to the bizarreness of the Demon Sealing Jade. He looked at the woman, and his eyes shone with a strange light.

Quite a large group of Cultivators had flown over and were bowing to the woman and offering respectful words. One of them was none other than the middle-aged man named Li, who bowed toward her politely.

The moment that Meng Hao’s gaze fell upon the woman, she looked down at him and seemed to pause in mid-air. A sharp look filled her eyes as she looked at him.

Their gazes locked for the space of a few breaths. The woman’s brow furrowed slightly, and then she looked away and continued off into the distance. She left, but the man named Li seemed to have taken notice of the look that had passed between the two of them.

He had also noticed Shan Ling’s furrowed brow. He gave a cold harrumph, and then his body flashed, and he shot down toward Meng Hao.

This aroused the attention of the surrounding Solitary Sword Sect disciples. In the blink of an eye, the man named Li arrived to float above the courtyard where Meng Hao stood. He looked down, a cold gleam in his eyes.

“You again!” he said coldly. “First you overestimate your strength, and then you dare to be disrespectful to the Solitary Sword Sect’s Elder Sister Shan Ling! Just what is your purpose in coming here?!” This caused many of the surrounding disciples to look at Meng Hao.

“Who is this guy?”

“He looks a bit familiar, but I don’t think I’ve seen him before....”

“I remember him. That’s the guest who Elder Brother Chen brought with him earlier this afternoon. I wonder what Elder Brother Li wants with him?”

Meng Hao’s expression was the same as ever as he looked up at the haughty Li character.

“What exactly do you mean, your excellency?” said Meng Hao coolly.

“Whatever your purpose here, you’re in the Solitary Sword Sect. Considering your actions here, I think I need to take your Elder Brother’s place in teaching you a lesson.” He obviously wasn’t interested in providing any sort of education to Meng Hao. Meng Hao had left him with a bad impression originally, and when combined with the Shan Ling’s frown, caused him to be filled with ill feelings. He lifted his right hand, whereupon the power of the great circle of Foundation Establishment exploded out.

“Ridiculous,” said Meng Hao coolly. The Li man’s hand descended, and the illusory image of a large sword appeared. It descended toward Meng Hao, bursting with the power of the great circle of Foundation Establishment.

Meng Hao’s eyes flashed coldly, and he lifted his own hand. He didn’t have any good feelings toward this person, after all. However, before he could actually do anything, a small black dagger shot toward them and

slammed into the Li man's phantom sword.

A boom rattled out, and the phantom sword disintegrated. The Li man's face flashed as Chen Fan shot toward them in a beam of colorful light.

“Elder Brother Li, you continue to harass my Junior Brother. With a Cultivation base at the False Core stage, must you really cause me to lose so much face? I'm one of the Seven Solitary Sword Sons. Just who the hell do you think you are?”

TL Notes:

1. Shan Ling's name in Chinese is 山灵 shān líng. Shan means “mountain.” Ling means “spirit” ↔

# Chapter 181: Meeting One's Match, the General Meets the Genius

Chen Fan arrived at the same time as his words. He landed in front of Meng Hao, glaring up coldly at the man named Li.

The Li man's expression became somewhat unsightly. He stared at Chen Fan, and his gaze especially seemed to take note of the black flying dagger.

"Do you really think you can protect him forever?" he said with a cold snort. His face filled with disdain as he looked at Meng Hao. "He won't amount to anything if all he can do is hide behind others. It seems mid Foundation Establishment is the end of the line for him!"

"As long as I'm here, I won't let you touch a hair on my little Junior Brother's head!" said Chen Fan, his voice cool, but hard enough to chop nails and slice iron.

Li glared hatefully at Meng Hao, his disdain growing thicker. "If it weren't for your Elder Brother, I would kill you with the wave of a hand. Let's see how long you can keep hiding!" He turned, flicking his sleeve and disappearing into the distance.

Meng Hao sighed as he watched the man leave. He had read the man's expression, of course, but could do nothing about it. Exterminating him would be simple, but twice now, Chen Fan had stood in front of him, making it impossible to proceed with battle.

Chen Fan looked back at Meng Hao, who gave a wry smile.

Chen Fan, of course, misinterpreted Meng Hao's expression. "Don't worry, little Junior Brother," he said comfortingly. "That Li fellow is nothing. With me here, he won't dare to bully you." His expression was one of concern, leaving Meng Hao without a word to say. "Unfortunately, Master went into secluded meditation last month, and it seems he won't emerge for a few more months. I left him a message, though. He'll get it as soon as he comes out.

"After you and I get back from the Song Clan, you can officially join the

Solitary Sword Sect. Then that Li guy won't dare to mess with you. Although, in the meantime, you need to be a bit more careful. Well, I'll be here by your side anyway, so it doesn't matter."

Chen Fan's concern made Meng Hao feel warm in his heart. "Many thanks, Elder Brother," he said, clasping hands and bowing.

"What's there to thank? Don't be so polite! Come come. Let's light some candles and chat all night." He laughed heartily as he pulled Meng Hao into the house. Once inside, he slapped his bag of holding to produce two jars of alcohol.

"Your Elder Brother doesn't have much to offer here. But when I went to Master's I grabbed these two jars of Sword Wine. This stuff is pretty good. I've really come to like it over the past few years." He handed one of the jars to Meng Hao, then opened his own and took a swig.

Meng Hao accepted the jar and took a drink. His face immediately grew a bit red, and his entire body suddenly felt hot and dry. Sweat broke out all over. He took a deep breath, and then slowly let it out.

He felt as if his entire body had just been washed out. Sweating, he continued to breathe in and out. His eyes seemed to glisten a bit more brightly. He looked at Chen Fan.

"What alcohol is this?"

"Master brews it himself. Heh heh. Come on, drink up. This alcohol is really good for Cultivators, especially for the Foundation Establishment stage. It's comparable to medicinal pills!" He smiled and took another drink. "I drink this stuff all the time. Oh, by the way, little Junior Brother, I see your Cultivation base is at the mid Foundation Establishment level. Don't forget, we Cultivators are building mountains; you must establish a firm foundation." His words were earnest, causing Meng Hao to put down his jar of alcohol and listen thoughtfully. Occasionally he nodded in agreement. "Don't greedily speed through the various stages and ignore your fundamentals.

"Take me, for example. I could have created my fourth Dao Pillar and entered mid Foundation Establishment last year. But Master wouldn't



permit it. He always says that creating Dao Pillars is like turning trees into boats. It can't be undone. The best thing to do is go with the flow, and exercise caution. Creating a fourth Dao Pillar isn't as important as refining the third pillar. Once it is full and complete, then the fourth Dao Pillar can be created properly.

"Another thing," said Chen Fan, sounding extremely serious. "During the course of our Cultivating, we are bound to encounter friction with other Cultivators. But you cannot solve all problems by killing! You need to understand that regardless of whether you're talking about magical techniques or magical items, they are all just ways to protect the Dao! They are protection, not the Dao itself!

"What is the Dao? My Cultivation base isn't high enough, so I probably shouldn't even bring it up. But Master told me that even though he doesn't quite understand it himself, there's something that should never be forgotten; killing and magical techniques are all just for protection!

"Don't let your Dao be overwhelmed by killing. You need to listen to your heart, and follow your principles." Chen Fan looked Meng Hao over. "You know, you seem to have a fairly strong killing aura."

Even as the words came out of his mouth, a voice could be heard from within Meng Hao's bag of the Cosmos.

"That's right! That's right! I said this child's killing aura was too strong. You're right. You make a lot of sense. Your words are extremely accurate!" The suddenness of the voice's appearance left Chen Fan dumbfounded.

Meng Hao's face darkened. Before he could say anything, a flash of colorful light emerged from the bag of the Cosmos which turned into a parrot. It flapped its wings as it flew around the room.

The meat jelly parrot had previously been in the blood-colored mask, preaching to the Li Clan Patriarch. Now, it flew a few circles around the room and then landed on Meng Hao's shoulder.

"What's that...?" said Chen Fan, still in shock.

"I picked this thing up and found that it can't be thrown away..." replied

Meng Hao. Before he could finish, the meat jelly parrot interrupted him.

“Son, you couldn’t be more correct,” it said, eying Chen Fan energetically. “Meng Hao’s killing aura is too strong. It’s wrong! Immoral! Come come, let’s discuss a few things. I think I’m going to like you.”

Meng Hao took a deep breath and looked at Chen Fan sympathetically. He could only imagine the torture Chen Fan would be dealing with momentarily.

“So you’re my littler Junior Brother’s Spirit creature,” said Chen Fan, looking curiously at the parrot on Meng Hao’s shoulder. “Pleased to meet you, sir. I’m happy to discuss anything with you.”

Seeing the gleam in Chen Fan’s eye, Meng Hao sighed to himself. There was really nothing he could do to save him.... But Meng Hao couldn’t bear to just do nothing.

“Elder brother, this bird....”

“Junior Brother, you misspoke,” said Chen Fan in a serious tone. “This isn’t a bird, it’s a parrot. And it can speak! You can see from the look in its eye that it’s intelligent. It’s a Spirit! You really need to take good care of it.”

The meat jelly seemed to be on the verge of tears after hearing Chen Fan’s words. It seemed to have finally met a kindred spirit.

“You are so correct. You make so much sense. Why couldn’t I have met you first? Aiiiii. There’s no need to bring that up. Now, why don’t we discuss the meaning of life?”

“The meaning of life? Okay!” said Chen Fan excitedly. “I’ve always wanted to have a discussion about the meaning of life. But for some reason, my Master is always in secluded meditation. In fact, so are my Junior and Elder brothers. I originally planned to chat with my little Junior Brother tonight, but if you want to join, the please, by all means do.”

“A discussion about the meaning of life needs to be built up to, though. For example... why don’t we talk about this morning’s weather? Only a truly educated person can discuss the weather....”

“Huh? The weather? Well... okay. I think the weather was excellent this morning. But you know, I think it might be more beneficial to discuss the killing aura coming off of my little Junior Brother.”

“Eee? I completely agree with you there. You are so correct. You make so much sense. I always say that if the weather is bad, it can have a negative influence on your mood. I mean, I mean, don’t you agree about that...?”

“Well that’s the first time I’ve heard of such a thing,” said Chen Fan. “But it actually makes a lot of sense. I remember one day a few years ago, it was really overcast outside, and my Cultivation didn’t go very well. I was fidgety all day. Yeah, I think what you said just now makes a lot of sense.”

“A lot of sense? You think I make a lot of sense?! Heavens! Dear heavens! In this life, and the life before that, and the life before that, I’ve never met anyone who said such a thing. You think I make sense....” The meat jelly parrot was shaking in excitement. It flew off of Meng Hao’s shoulder to stand in front of Chen Fan.

Their talking turned into a buzzing that filled Meng Hao’s ears as he watched on in a daze. The eyes of both Chen Fan and the parrot began to shine brightly. They had both met their kindred spirits, and as they talked, it gradually became apparent that a contest of sorts had begun.

Meng Hao suddenly shivered and edged backward.

He moved as far away as possible, to a distant corner of the building, where he sat cross-legged to meditate. He feared that if he continued to listen, he would become far too annoyed. The clamor of the bird by itself was bad enough, but now....

As Meng Hao looked at Chen Fan and the meat jelly parrot, a single thought ran through his mind; “Meeting one’s match, the General meets the Genius....”

Time passed by, and Meng Hao did his best to ignore the sound of their conversation. Two hours passed, and he finally opened his eyes. He had assumed their discussion would be nearing an end, but when he peeked over, he discovered that they were engaged in a lively conversation.

“Right? Tell me, am I right, or not...?”

“Absolutely correct. Actually, that makes me think about one day last year when I...”

“Of course! That’s what I said earlier! Oh right, weren’t we going to talk about the meaning of life? How about this: after we finish talking about this morning’s weather, then we can talk about the noon sunshine....”

“Great idea. Let’s save the meaning of life for the end of the conversation. The best would be to wait until dusk. The best time to talk about life is under the setting sun....”

The sound droned on in Meng Hao’s ears. He stared blankly at Chen Fan’s excited face and the equally enthusiastic meat jelly parrot. One man, one bird, their eyes shining with anticipation.... It caused Meng Hao to shiver and close his eyes again to meditate, fearful of getting dragged into the discussion.

Time, slowly passed....

# Chapter 182: There's Always a Bird Out There That's Better Than You

Dawn.... Meng Hao opened his eyes, then immediately closed them again.

“What a good friend! In the past several lives, I’ve only had myself to talk to. I never realized how boring it is to talk to myself... And I could never figure out why everyone hates me so much. They even call me Ultimate Vexation....”

“Yeah! I haven’t had a discussion like this the entire time I’ve been in the Solitary Sword Sect.”

“Come come, now that we’ve finished talking about the noon sunshine, let’s talk a bit about the afternoon....”

Late morning.... Sunlight filtered into the house. Meng Hao opened his eyes and stared blankly at Chen Fan and the meat jelly. He sighed and continued to meditate.

“Let me tell you, I’m sick of afternoons. I remember the afternoon of one year when I....”

“You’re right! I’m the same way. But the only thing I can do during that time is to grind my teeth....”

More hours passed, and soon it was afternoon. Meng Hao opened his eyes a few times, but all he could do was laugh bitterly and close them again.

Chen Fan and the meat jelly had talked through the entire night, all the way through the morning. One man, one bird, seemingly inexhaustible and, in fact, in high spirits.

Meng Hao couldn’t help but admire Elder Brother Chen. It seemed he really was a perfect match for the meat jelly.

Meng Hao sat quietly. He wanted to stand up, but was worried that Chen Fan and the meat jelly would drag him into their conversation. He took a

breath and then closed his eyes, pretending that he couldn't hear anything that they were saying.

Eventually, the sun began to set....

"I like sunset the best. Every time I gaze at the setting sun, I think of that time one year when I was just a tiny meat jelly, I...."

"Sunset is immeasurably wonderful. You know, you really don't know how difficult it is to practice Cultivation. Oh, that reminds me, throughout the years, I've actually collected a thousand different stories about the sunset. I really want to tell you all of them. Come come. I'll start with the first one...."

The sun had set, and evening passed. Soon it was night again. One man, one bird, chattering away endlessly for a day and a night. They talked on, seemingly not the least bit tired. When midnight came, it finally seemed that Chen Fan wasn't able to keep going.

"Umm, why don't we rest a bit?"

"No way! I don't get many chances to have such a lovely discussion. We still haven't talked about the meaning of life yet. Ah, the meaning of life. What a beautiful whatchamacallit flower. Oh, right. I forgot. Before we talk about the meaning of life, we need to talk about moonlight...."

[TL Notes : In this passage, he starts to erroneously quote a Chinese expression, but then kind of gives up in the middle]

"Uh... Alright. Actually, I have over three thousand stories about the moonlight...."

"Eee? I have some stories too! Actually, I have ten thousand. You go first, and then me."

Meng Hao was almost on the verge of collapse. His eyes were bloodshot, and he panted as he forced himself to calm down and return to meditation.

The night passed slowly. Outside, everything was quiet. But within the room, one man and one bird had reached the pinnacle of their

conversation. Early morning light once again made its way into the house. Chen Fan's face was a bit wan, and his eyes were bloodshot.

"Let's rest a bit... I... I have some plans today...."

"No way! I'm not finished yet. We still haven't talked about the meaning of life. Now that I'm finished with my ten thousand stories about the moonlight, we can continue our discussion."

Morning passed, and soon it was noontime, then another sunset. Chen Fan's expression was dull as he stared at the parrot and its unceasing torrent of words. A look of admiration slowly grew in his eyes.

"Now that we have built up the conversation properly, we can finally discuss the meaning of life. Eee...? It's dark outside. I just realized that when we talked about sunset, there were thirty thousand stories I forgot to mention. That won't do! I don't get chances like this very often. I need to tell you those stories...." The meat jelly cleared its throat a few times, and then began speaking again.

A few hours passed, until finally Chen Fan's patience and long-windedness were run out. "I... I really do have some plans...." said Chen Fan, standing up suddenly.

His body swayed back and forth a bit, and then he took a few steps back, his face drained of blood. Meng Hao opened his eyes and looked admiringly at Chen Fan. He had just chatted nonstop for two days and two nights....

"Little Junior Brother, I actually have some plans, so I'm going to take off. Um... I'll come back for you in a few days...." His face was pale and he looked dizzy. As of now, he didn't look at the meat jelly with admiration, but rather, fear.

He'd always thought of himself as someone who could talk, but now he realized how wrong he was. There existed a bird that could surpass even him! Without waiting for Meng Hao to respond, Chen Fan opened the door and fled.

"Elder Brother," Meng Hao called after him, "I think you have an affinity

with this talking Spirit parrot, why don't you take it with you....”

Chen Fan suddenly staggered, and his face twisted. Without an instant of hesitation, his body transformed into a beam of light that disappeared into the distance.

“What a good fellow,” said the meat jelly parrot, sighing with emotion. “I really like this Elder Brother Chen of yours. I haven't met someone in years who could carry on such a long conversation with me. Eee? We never discussed the meaning of life!”

Meng Hao's scalp suddenly began to grow numb. To be able to provoke such a reaction from Elder Brother Chen showed how truly powerful this meat jelly was. Such power was rarely seen in the world.

“It's too bad I couldn't finish,” said the meat jelly discontentedly. “I was just starting to get excited. Now it's all over?” Chattering away, it flew up onto Meng Hao's shoulder. “Why don't you chat a bit with me, I'm feeling a bit lonely....”

Meng Hao's face went pale, and he took a deep breath. He forced a wry smile onto his face, and his mind spun, trying to come up with an idea.

“I think perhaps you forgot someone,” he said.

“Who? Who? Who? Who did I forget? How could I forget somebody?” Given a chance to have a conversation, the meat jelly would definitely seize it immediately.

“You forgot about the old man in the mask!” said Meng Hao hurriedly. “You still haven't turned him back from the path of wickedness.”

“Eee? Right! That old man isn't too bad, actually. But you're right. I need to go have a talk with him.” Face shining with anticipation, the meat jelly parrot flashed, instantly disappearing into Meng Hao's bag of the Cosmos.

Meng Hao could just barely hear the sound of the Li Clan Patriarch's sad, shrill cry when the meat jelly entered the mask. He had never heard such a cry come from the man before.

Meng Hao let out a long sigh and sat down on the ground, laughing



bitterly. He looked at the moonlight outside and sighed again, wondering about what his life would be like in the coming days. Having the meat jelly with him constantly was a frightening thought.

“There must be a way to control it. That damned meat jelly....” Meng Hao gritted his teeth, and his eyes glittered brightly. “Its old enemy... the copper mirror... the parrot....” His eyes glittered even more brightly when he thought about reaching Core Formation. His anticipation soared to new heights.

Three days flashed by, during which time Chen Fan never returned. Obviously, he was so frightened of Meng Hao’s meat jelly that he didn’t dare to come back. If he did, the meat jelly parrot might draw him into another conversation.

It was on the fourth day that he cautiously made his way back. He opened the door to the room, then immediately retreated several steps. When he saw that there was no parrot on Meng Hao’s shoulder, he glanced around the room and then let out a sigh.

Meng Hao could only give him a wry smile. What else could he say?

Chen Fan stood nervously outside the room. “That.... Little Junior Brother, it... it’s gone?” He looked very nervous.

“Pretty much....” replied Meng Hao, standing up and walking out.

Chen Fan let out a long sigh and looked at Meng Hao with a forced smile.

“Little Junior Brother, that parrot of yours is... Wow, what a bird. I truly admire it. Well, no need to talk about it, really. There are only a few more days until the Song Clan’s banquet. I’ve already arranged everything. When it comes time, we can teleport directly there. Today, why don’t you let me show you around the Solitary Sword Sect? After all, when we come back from the Song Clan, this will be your Sect, so you should get to know it.” He grabbed Meng Hao’s sleeve and pulled him out to the courtyard.

Meng Hao’s expression was the same as ever, but in his mind appeared an image of the map of the Southern Domain. The Song Clan was located

relatively close to the Violet Fate Sect. As for the Solitary Sword Sect, Meng Hao thought about it a lot during the past days and had finally reached a conclusion. He decided that he would not take advantage of Chen Fan's offer to join the Solitary Sword Sect.

He still wanted to figure out some way to disguise himself and join the Violet Fate Sect. He would learn Violet Qi from the East as well as alchemy. And he would also figure out a way to get Grandmaster Pill Demon to dispel his poison.

As for the Solitary Sword Sect, Meng Hao didn't believe that Chen Fan's master would be able to help him get rid of the poison. He needed the help of someone, not of the Nascent Soul stage, but the Spirit Severing stage!

Meng Hao was certain of this. However, Chen Fan was so warm and welcoming, he didn't feel it was appropriate to tell him directly. Regarding the Song Clan, Meng Hao very much wanted to go see it; however, because of his concerns regarding the Black Sieve Sect, he was still hesitating.

"I need to figure out a way to get in touch with Han Bei..." he thought. "She should be able to tell me what ended up happening with the Black Sieve Sect." He rubbed his bag of holding, and a cold smile touched his lips. There inside was a piece of jade which he could use to keep Han Bei in her place.

He followed Chen Fan around the Solitary Sword Sect. Buildings lined the meandering paths, and streams flowed here and there. The whole place looked both imposing and tasteful.

The two of them chatted as they walked, and soon it was noontime. Eventually, they reached a large circular structure which was filled with hundreds of energetic Solitary Sword Sect disciples.

"This is the Battle Arena," explained Chen Fan, "where Solitary Sword Sect disciples can fight each other. You can injure, but not kill. There are strict punishments for anyone who breaks the rules."

Meng Hao looked at it and was about to walk away when suddenly, his brow furrowed. A sinister voice suddenly rang out.

“Guests can fight in the Battle Arena to exchange techniques with our Sect disciples. I, Li, shall enter the arena. I would like to invite this outsider guest... to duel with me if he dares!” It was none other the middle-aged man named Li. A hypocritical smile covered his face as he strolled out from the crowd, staring mockingly at Meng Hao.

“Will you hide behind your Elder Brother again? Can you even make a single attack, you good-for-nothing loser? If you don’t dare to fight, then you’d better hope you don’t have to face me again in the future.”

Everyone’s eyes came to rest on Meng Hao and Chen Fan.

# Chapter 183: How Long Since We Saw That Shy Face?

Meng Hao's expression was the same as usual. He wasn't the least bit moved. He looked calmly at the sneering Li, and Zhou Shanyue, who stood next to him, face grim.

Chen Fan looked angry. He knew that Elder Brother Li and Zhou Shanyue were on good terms, and that neither of them liked him very much. It was only because of his flying dagger that they never did much to him.

However, having Meng Hao at his side had caused innumerable difficulties with this sinister pair.

"If you want a fight, how about you two versus me?" said Chen Fan coldly.

"As fellow Sect members, we have nothing to learn from each other," laughed Li. "I want to see if I can pick up a move or two from this outsider. Junior Brother Chen, you aren't really going to prevent such an exchange, will you?"

Chen Fan gave a cold snort, grabbing Meng Hao to leave. Meng Hao smiled. He found the whole situation quite amusing. However, Chen Fan seemed devoted to keeping Meng Hao safe, and he didn't want to refuse his good will. He was just about to follow along with Chen Fan when Zhou Shanyue's dark voice rang out.

"If you're scared, we understand." The surrounding Solitary Sword Sect disciples all laughed loudly. "How about this: Elder Brother Li will restrict his power to that of the mid Foundation Establishment stage. That would make things fair. We really want to see what magic you outsiders have. Junior Brother Chen, this matter has nothing to do with you. You can't keep him hiding behind you forever."

Solitary Sword Sect Cultivators generally stay away from outsiders. Many of them, although they didn't want to sneer at Elder Brother Chen, were

getting excited at the scene which was playing out in front of them.

Chen Fan ignored them, continuing to pull Meng Hao away. However, hearing Zhou Shanyue's words caused Meng Hao to suddenly stop in his tracks. He turned and looked at Li and Zhou Shanyue, forcing an outraged expression to appear on his face.

"Since a battle to the death is out of the question, we need to make a wager," he said, making his voice seem out of control.

Hearing this, the surrounding Solitary Sword Sect Cultivators burst into more laughter. Many of them had Cultivation bases lower than Meng Hao, but they were disciples of the Solitary Sword Sect, the number one Sect in the Southern Domain. It was only natural for them to feel somewhat superior.

Zhou Shanyue laughed, as did middle-aged Li.

"Excellent," said Li. "If you stop hiding behind Junior Brother Chen and dare to fight me, then there's no harm in making a little wager. I have a treasured sword as well as several tens of thousands of Spirit Stones!" Laughing, he slapped his bag of holding to produce an azure-colored sword. The sword aura which swirled around it wasn't spectacular, but wasn't ordinary either.

"Little Junior Brother, you...." said Chen Fan.

He was about to continue when Meng Hao, eyes bloodshot, interrupted him. Glaring, he said, "A handful of Spirit Stones and a sword aren't enough for Meng Hao. Put some more onto the table, sir, and then I'll fight you!" His loud voice rang out. The words he had spoken, and the expression on his face, were something he had long since become accustomed to using. He had faced many situations like this in the State of Zhao. Furthermore, he still had an unused golden spear in his bag of the Cosmos....

The crowd around them laughed loudly. Li looked at Meng Hao, his sneer growing larger.

"Very well," he said. "Whatever you put up as stakes, sir, I will match in

value.”

Next to him, Zhou Shanyue laughed. “No matter,” he said. “Whatever you produce, if Elder Brother Li matches it in value, then so shall I!” He glared at Chen Fan, and deep in his eyes, killing intent swirled.

Meng Hao gasped. His eyes darted around as if he wished to run away. “Are you serious?!” he said, his voice sounding forced.

“You’re in the Solitary Sword Sect, now,” said Zhou Shanyue haughtily. “Do you really think we would lie?”

Chen Fan grabbed Meng Hao’s arm and was about to say something.

Trembling, Meng Hao looked over at him and said, “Elder Brother Chen, can you please loan me your flying dagger?”

Chen Fan looked at Meng Hao for a long moment. Finally, he lifted his hand up, and the black flying dagger appeared, a blade which could unleash the power of the Core Formation stage!

This dagger was extremely important to Chen Fan. If he lost it, his position within the Sect would immediately become unstable. The repercussions would be dire. However, it only took the space of a few breaths for him to make up his mind to place it in Meng Hao’s hand.

This display of brotherly affection caused Meng Hao to look deeply at Chen Fan. A warm feeling filled his entire body, creating a memory that would exist for the rest of his life.

“Junior Brother,” said Chen Fan, his eyes glowing with encouragement, “if you’re really going to fight, then do so with a light heart. If you lose, it won’t matter. No big deal. And if you win, then win something good!” Although he didn’t have much faith that Meng Hao could win, this was his style.

Everything was quiet around them as the crowd stared at the black flying dagger in Meng Hao’s hand.

The silence lasted only for a moment before a buzz of conversation filled the air.

“That’s Patriarch Zhou’s Core Formation flying dagger!!”

“That’s the symbol of the Seven Solitary Sword Sons, and Elder Brother Chen is actually giving it to a stranger to put up as stakes for a bet....”

“These stakes are incredible!!”

The surrounding disciple’s eyes shone brightly, and more than a few produced transmission jade slips to notify other fellow disciples of what was happening.

“This is what I’m putting up. Now it’s your turn. No bet, no fight!” Meng Hao’s voice was resolute, and his eyes shone with a do-or-die look. To the onlookers, however, it appeared that his coolness was forced, and that he was simply trying to bluff Zhou and Li into leaving him alone.

Zhou Shanyue’s body trembled as he glared at the black dagger in Meng Hao’s hand. He panted, as did middle-aged Li. They exchanged an excited, shocked glance.

They had never imagined that Chen Fan would actually take out the flying dagger and give it to his Junior Brother to put up as stakes in the bet.

“If you don’t have anything to bet, then you can’t blame me for not participating,” repeated Meng Hao, preparing to hand the flying dagger back to Elder Brother Chen. Zhou Shanyue obviously couldn’t allow this to happen. His hand shot up and he ripped open the top of his robe to reveal a jade pendant hanging around his neck.

“This is a life-saving jade forged by my father himself with blood from his Cultivation base. It has no attack power, but it can stand up against an attack from the Nascent Soul Stage! If you win, then it’s yours. I’ll even give you some of my Cultivation base blood to use to refine it! I, Zhou, never go back on my word!” His tone of voice could chop nails and slice iron. As they rang out, Chen Fan, along with the rest of the onlookers, gasped. Chen Fan stared at the life-saving jade. It was a treasure his master had bestowed upon his son to protect him. In terms of value, it definitely exceeded his flying dagger.

Meng Hao put on a look of complete shock. He began to breathe heavily, causing Zhou Shanyue to laugh coldly, his eyes shining coldly.

In a seemingly forced voice, Meng Hao said, "That's not enough. You just said that both of you would match the value of whatever I put up!"

Hearing this, middle-aged Li laughed heartily. He glared coldly at Meng Hao, and then gave pale-faced Chen Fan a sinister look. At the moment, he was convinced of what to do. He knew Chen Fan and Chen Fan's personality. He wouldn't do anything devious, so clearly his expression revealed his true feelings.

"I, Li, don't have any precious treasures like Junior Brother Zhou. However, I do have some Spirit Stones saved up. Fellow disciples, if you are able to loan me some Spirit Stones, it will be to your benefit. I will pay them back with an additional one stone for every hundred you give." He laughed again, watching as the hundreds of surrounding Cultivators saluted him respectfully. A few of them flew over to him, and then more and more.

"No problem, Elder Brother Li. Of course we can help you."

"Hahaha! I don't have a lot of Spirit Stones, just a few thousand, my savings from the past few years. If you need them, Elder Brother Li, then they're yours."

"Don't worry, Elder Brother Li. We can definitely help you out."

The voices of hundreds of Cultivators filled the air. All of them produced Spirit Stones, in amounts ranging from hundreds to thousands. Soon, they had been piled together into a group of several tens of thousands of Spirit Stones.

"These Spirit Stones can't compare in value to Junior Brother Zhou's precious treasure. Fine, fine, I won't try to take advantage of you. I have some magical items in my bag of holding that are worth tens of thousands of Spirit Stones. In total, their value is roughly 500,000!" He flicked his sleeve, and then shot into the air, transforming into a beam of light which shot toward the Battle Arena. Amidst the excited cries of the surrounding Cultivators, he landed in the middle of the arena and turned to stare at



Meng Hao.

Chen Fan looked at Meng Hao with a forced smile. He was just about to give some advice when Meng Hao put the flying dagger on the ground and then flew up in the air toward the Battle Arena.

No one made a move to stop him.

As he entered, the surrounding Cultivators craned their necks to watch. Middle-aged Li stood there arrogantly. He pressed his finger down onto the space between his eyebrows. Immediately, his Cultivation base sank down from the late Foundation Establishment stage to the mid Foundation Establishment stage, as if he had six Dao Pillars.

“Li is not the sort of person who would bully you,” he said, sticking his jaw out, “so I’ll only use the power of the mid Foundation Establishment stage. Under no circumstances will I use the power of late Foundation Establishment.”

“Actually, there’s no need for that,” murmured Meng Hao. He stood there in the Battle Arena, his expression very different than before. There was nothing fake about his expression now. He smiled, and within the smile was happiness, as well as a bit of shyness.

The people here weren’t familiar with this shyness. But the people from the Violet Fate Sect who had traded with him years before in the State of Zhao would know it well. It would cause their scalps to grow numb if they saw it. They would think themselves to be in some kind of nightmare, and would most likely fly into a violent rage.

“In a bit, you’ll have to eat your words....” said Meng Hao shyly. He looked just like the young scholar that had stood there on Mount Daqing years ago. He seemed a little embarrassed as he took a step forward.

# Chapter 184: Seven Exterminations

This man named Li had no way to know how famous Meng Hao was in the State of Zhao, nor about the iron spear which was still located within the Violet Fate Sect....

Meng Hao's body flickered as he shot toward Li. He lifted his right hand and flashed an incantation sign; immediately, a Flame Dragon roared out.

It wasn't very large, only about thirty meters long, and its color was not normal. Instead of being the color of fire, it was dark, and had two flapping wings. This was obviously a Flying Rain-Dragon.

Power from Meng Hao's Cultivation base was congealed inside of it, and not a drop seeped out. Only someone significantly more powerful than Meng Hao, someone of a higher stage, would be able to sense the slight fluctuations of the Cultivation base power within it.

From the look of it, it really did seem to be something that would be produced by the power of mid Foundation Establishment, or perhaps even inferior to that.

Sneers filled the faces of the Cultivators outside the Battle Arena. They were clearly very amused by the whole scene.

Chen Fan groaned inwardly. He didn't say anything, but his eyes were dull as he thought, not about his flying dagger, but the fact that this was a Battle Arena, and there was no way to tell what deadly moves Li might use.

Zhou Shanyue watched on, a smile covering his face. He looked exceedingly pleased. He had never liked Chen Fan, not from the very beginning when his father had brought him back to the Solitary Sword Sect. He felt that his father treated him far too well for the outsider that he was.

As for the flying dagger that had been given to Chen Fan, Zhou Shanyue thought of it as his own. How could it be given to someone else? And how come he wasn't a member of the current generation of the Seven Solitary Sword Sons?

He didn't understand, but also didn't dare to complain to his father. This caused his enmity toward Chen Fan to grow stronger and stronger.

"Finally I have a chance today!" he thought. "Chen Fan, ahh, Chen Fan, the flying dagger will finally belong to me. You trifling nobody. Do you really dare to contend with me?!" A smile broke out on his face, and he laughed.

Back within the Battle Arena, Li also laughed. A haughty look covered his face as he watched Meng Hao's Flame Dragon speeding toward him. He sneered.

"A barbarian Cultivator from a backwater Sect," he said loftily. "You don't deserve to even be here. Your magic is so simple! You really dare to use a trifling Flame Dragon art? Even being restricted to the mid Foundation Establishment stage, I can still kill you with ease." He flicked his sleeve, and the power of his mid Foundation Establishment stage boiled out. He raised his hand and the illusory image of a sun and a moon appeared on either side of his palm.

The images of the sun and moon transformed into two gleaming sword auras. Li waved his hand and they shot screaming into the air, straight toward the incoming Flame Dragon.

A cheer rose up from the surrounding Cultivators when they saw this.

Of course, all of this takes some time to describe, but happened in an instant. The images of the sun and moon swords slammed into the Flame Dragon, and as they did, for some unknown reason, they began to twist and warp.

A bang exploded out as the moon sword pushed up against the Flame Dragon. It seemed like it was trying to move a mountain. The sword instantly collapsed to pieces. Before the pieces could float away, they were transformed into ash by the heat of the Flame Dragon.

At the same time, the sun sword also collapsed. The thirty meter long Flame Dragon didn't even seem to have been scratched. Its momentum increased as it shot toward Li.

As it shot forward, its body expanded. Thirty meters, ninety meters, one hundred and fifty meters... in the blink of an eye, it was three hundred meters long and growing!

A mysterious power emanated out from the Flame Dragon, forming into a monstrous Flame Sea. This was the Qi of the Flame Dragon. Its massive wings spread out to cover the sky, causing the Battle Arena to be submerged in flame.

All of this occurred too quickly, and middle-aged Li could not possibly have predicted that it would happen. It was the same with Zhou Shanyue, as well as all the surrounding Solitary Sword Sect disciples, who watched on with stunned faces.

A roaring sound filled the air, and the Battle Arena shook. The shield covering the Battle Arena rippled as it held back the power.

At the same time as the roaring sounded out, Meng Hao suddenly shot forward, attacking as fast as lightning. Li's face went white, and filled with an expression of disbelief. Nine jade slips appeared and floated around him, emanating a protective energy which defended him from the massive power of the Flame Sea.

These nine jade slips were clearly extraordinary in their protective power. However, Meng Hao continued to shoot toward him like an arrow. In an instant, he slammed into the shield generated by the nine jade slips.

Another boom resonated out, along with a miserable shout. The onlookers watched on, dumbstruck as the flames began to die out. Li spun backward like a kite with its string cut, blood shooting out of his mouth, his eyes filled with shock. He cut a sorry figure.

Meng Hao emerged from the Flame Sea, his face calm. He smiled, and still had the shy look on his face.

Zhou Shanyue gasped when this happened, and then stared in shock. Chen Fan blinked his eyes, looking at Meng Hao with disbelief.

Amidst the silence of the shocked audience, middle-aged Li's body stopped moving. A grim expression appeared on his face, and then he

pushed down on the space between his eyebrows.

Suddenly, his body quivered and then filled with the power of the great circle of Foundation Establishment. False Core stage power immediately exploded out from him.

This power was far, far beyond what he had exhibited moments ago. His eyes radiating killing intent as he watched Meng Hao striding out from within the Flame Sea. A haughty look once again filled his face.

“You seem qualified to be slain by the true power of my Cultivation base!”

Meng Hao’s expression was the same as ever. He smiled shyly, but said nothing. Seeing the smile, Li felt a strong feeling of abhorrence. He shot forward, his hand lifting toward his bag of holding and retrieving a sword.

The azure-colored sword spun rapidly above his head, forming the shape of a whale. It sucked in the power of Li’s late Foundation Establishment stage power, whereupon a buzzing sound filled the air. Ghost images of the sword suddenly appeared, seven of them!

The buzz of conversation filled the air.

“Seven Exterminations! Elder Brother Li is using a killing move!!”

“That’s one of the most powerful stances of Foundation Establishment, a profound magic of the Seven Solitary Sword Sons....”

Chen Fan’s expression twisted. “Solitary Sword Seven Exterminations!” He was about to take a step forward when Zhou Shanban laughed and stretched out his arm to block the way.

“Junior Brother Chen, it’s prohibited to interfere with matches in the Battle Arena. You’re not going to break Sect rules are you?”

As the observing Solitary Sword Sect disciples discussed the proceedings, within the Battle Arena, Li’s hair whipped about wildly. He flashed incantation gestures, causing a cyclone to spring up. The cyclone merged with the azure sword, and a roaring sound filled the air. A vicious expression appeared on his face as he waved a finger.

The azure sword seemed to split the air as it shot with incredible speed toward Meng Hao.

This attack was one of the most powerful moves from a Cultivator of the great circle of Foundation Establishment, as well as one of the most powerful arts of the Solitary Sword Sect. For Li to use it in this situation made it clear that he intended to strike a fatal blow!

“I plan to use this magic to win a place among the Seven Sons. Today... I’ll christen it with your head!” His sinister voice echoed out as the sword screamed forward. The sword and its seven ghost images bore down onto the Meng Hao....

A smile appeared in Meng Hao’s eyes.

“In terms of magical techniques, I’m still a bit deficient....” he muttered to himself. He suddenly struck his hand forward. Immediately, everything began to shake, and the approaching sword suddenly stopped.

Meng Hao then took a step forward and struck his hand out a second time, then a third and a fourth time. Each time he did, he took another step. By the time he reached the fifth strike, he was upon the sword. The ground quaked as the massive image of an illusory hand appeared in front of Meng Hao. It shot toward the sword. 1

At the same time, Meng Hao’s Spiritual Sense burst out. When he was in the early Foundation Establishment stage, his Spiritual Sense could shock late Foundation Establishment Cultivators. But now he had an additional Dao Pillar, which made him even more powerful. The Spiritual Sense merged into the giant illusory hand. When the hand slammed into the azure sword, a massive bang rang out.

The azure sword shook. One by one, the ghost images surrounding it popped and disappeared. All of this takes some time to describe, but happened in an instant. The ghost images of the swords disintegrated, and then cracks began to cover the surface of the sword itself.

The illusory hand passed through the sword and then continued on toward Li. There was no way for him to dodge it, so it slammed directly into his body.

Blood sprayed from his mouth, and he staggered backward, his face pale. Meng Hao's fifth step placed him directly next to the azure sword. He reached up and pushed against it.

A cracking noise sounded out and the sword... split completely in half.

"You lose... Now pay up," said Meng Hao. He flicked his sleeve, sending the two pieces of the azure sword flying away to land at the feet of Li. Li's face was deathly pale, and he coughed up another mouthful of blood. His Qi seemed to have weakened. He looked at Meng Hao, a look of disbelief and bitter anguish covering his face.

He... had lost!

1. In case you forgot the origin of the technique Meng Hao is using, you can check out Chapter 149: Killing Intent!, as well as the chapter after that. ↩

# Chapter 185: Gathering at the Song Clan

Silence reigned outside of the Battle Arena. Hundreds of Solitary Sword Sect disciples stared at Meng Hao in shock and disbelief. As the seconds ticked by, their eyes filled with intense fear.

In the Cultivation world, respect is delivered to the powerful. Meng Hao was only at the mid Foundation Establishment stage, but the efficiency with which he had vanquished the great circle of late Foundation Establishment left a deep impression on everyone. Their fear transformed into respect. Respect for Meng Hao.

No one said anything. They watched him as he left the Battle Arena, the shy look still on his face as he walked back to Chen Fan.

Chen Fan gaped at him for a long moment. And then, a smile broke out on his face and he started to laugh. His laughter shattered the silence, and a hubbub immediately broke out.

“Who is that guy?!”

“He’s at the mid Foundation Establishment stage but actually defeated the great circle of Foundation Establishment! This type of Cultivation base... this type of power... he can’t be a nobody!”

“He... seems almost like a Dao Child! The magic he just used seemed somewhat familiar. It was like the Black Sieve Sect’s 19 Black Cloud Strikes....”

The sound of discussion echoed about. Zhou Shanyue’s face was pale as he staggered back a few steps. He tilted his head and stared closely at Meng Hao, the first time he had done so. Previously, he had thought Chen Fan was the one he needed to pay most attention to. His eyes filled with an intense, venomous hatred and rage.

“You despicable, shameless bastard! You’re a swindler!! You obviously know the power of your Cultivation base and pretended to be weak! You avoided battle before with the sole purpose of picking this fight!! Your depravity knows no bounds!!” Zhou Shanyue was gnashing his teeth and



cursing as middle-aged Li exited the Battle Arena, his face pale. He chuckled bitterly, looking at Meng Hao with complex expression that included hatred and other emotions.

He still didn't understand. Clearly, he had been played. He'd thought he had the situation completely under control, and yet it turned out that his opponent had effortlessly tricked him.

Then he thought of the Spirit Stones he had wagered, which weren't even his. He had borrowed them from surrounding fellow Sect members and had to pay back everything with interest. His face grew even more ashen.

Meng Hao gave a light cough. His expression bashful, he said, "You were the ones who insisted on the match." Zhou Shanyue trembled. With the flick of a sleeve, he turned to leave, clearly intending to go back on his word and not hand over the jade pendant.

Chen Fan gave a cold snort. "Junior Brother Zhou," he said coolly, "The stakes of a bet mean nothing, but the prestige of the Solitary Sword Sect is everything. Don't tell me you intend to break your word!?" Instantly, the eyes of all the surrounded Cultivators came to rest on Zhou Shanyue.

They were all Solitary Sword Sect disciples. They might not always be able to measure up to others in terms of skill, but the importance of upright conduct had been drilled into them from the moment they joined the Sect. One's word could not be broken.

Zhou Shanyue felt the eyes of hundreds of his fellow disciples upon him, and his expression flickered. He stamped his foot angrily on the ground. Heart aching, he took off his life-saving jade pendant and threw it toward Meng Hao. He also tossed out a drop of his own blood.

He glared at Meng Hao, his eyes filled with fury and disgrace. If he could, he would kill Meng Hao hundreds of times over. Finally, his body turned into a colorful beam that shot off into the distance.

Meng Hao coughed lightly again. Such gazes were not unfamiliar to him, and he was actually used to them. His eager gaze next fell upon Li's bag of holding. Inside were the tens upon tens of thousands of Spirit Stones

which he had put up as stakes in the bet.

Pale faced, Li couldn't help but wonder how he would possibly pay back his fellow Sect members. Then he thought about how he owed literally hundreds of people, and his vision grew dim.

Without the slightest trace of politeness, Chen Fan walked up and grabbed the bag of holding. Li did nothing to stop him. He could only smile sadly. Chen Fan was just about to turn and walk back, when Meng Hao coughed again.

"Elder Brother, there's also a sword worth tens of thousands of Spirit Stones." Could Meng Hao really forget that? Considering how much he cared about Spirit Stones, as well as desire to join a Sect, he might be able to forget about other things. But he could never forget matters related to Spirit Stones.

"The sword?" Chen Fan said to pale-faced Li, holding his hand out.

Face bitter, Li produced the sword. His heart trembled, and felt as if it would tear in half. He handed it over to Chen Fan, and from his expression, it looked like he was handing over the love of his life.

He glared murderously at Meng Hao, the venom in his eyes growing stronger and stronger.

"No shame whatsoever!" he said, clenching his jaw. He flicked his sleeve, turned and left.

Chen Fan gave a cold snort, and then hurried away with Meng Hao and all the winnings. They returned to his house, their faces covered with smiles.

"Little Junior Brother, we won out this time. But next time," he exhorted earnestly, "you can't do something like that. That was extremely dangerous, and also, you now have to worry about those two trying to get back at you."

Meng Hao nodded, knowing that Chen Fan was simply concerned for him. With a smile, he said, "Elder Brother, how about I take the Spirit Stones, and you keep the jade pendant?"

Chen Fan thought for a moment, and then replied, “No, I don’t need it. You take it. Listen to your Elder Brother. You take everything. This is my Sect, so I have everything I need. As for the jade pendant... consider this: You take it, but when Master emerges from secluded meditation, return it. After all, you will eventually be a member of the Sect.”

Meng Hao tried to convince him to take the piece of jade, but Chen Fan, although he didn’t directly refuse, declined to take it. Finally, Meng Hao collected together all his winnings, whereupon Chen Fan produced some more alcohol. The two Brothers sat down to drink, and chatted about the Reliance Sect.

A few days passed, and Chen Fan’s master continued to remain in secluded meditation. The date of the banquet at the Song Clan drew closer. Finally, one morning at dawn, the sound of bells filled the Solitary Sword Sect.

At the bottom of the mountain was a stretch of ground normally covered with restrictive spells. Currently, people were flying from all directions toward this very area.

Meng Hao was among them, flying alongside Chen Fan.

As he approached, the first thing Meng Hao noticed was an enormous teleportation portal, surrounded by nine stone pillars. Not far away from it, a gray-robed old man sat cross-legged and motionless.

“That’s the portal keeper,” said Chen Fan quietly. “His only job is to keep watch over the teleportation portal.” Meng Hao nodded, shifting his gaze to look at the portal itself as well as the surrounding area.

Other than Chen Fan and himself, there were three others present. They all wore the Daoist robes of the Solitary Sword Sect, and had large swords strapped to their backs. When he looked at them, they looked back and gave him slight nods.

With a smile, Meng Hao clasped hands and saluted them. They smiled back.

Despite the lack of any words being exchanged, Meng Hao could tell that

they knew who he was. Obviously, his match with Li had gained him no small amount of prestige in the Solitary Sword Sect over the past few days.

Time passed, and more people arrived. After the time it takes half an incense stick to burn, there were about eighteen people present. None of them were very old; most were around thirty, and some seemed to be as young as twenty.

They seemed to brim with vitality, and were all extraordinarily good looking. Furthermore, all of them were in the Foundation Establishment stage, two of the group being at the late Foundation Establishment stage.

As they arrived, each one would look at Meng Hao. Some would then nod, others simply ignored him.

“Soon Elder Fan will arrive,” whispered Chen Fan. “He’ll lead us through the teleportation portal to the Song Clan. Your Elder Brother is going to work hard to get you a beloved!” He chuckled, but his expression was very serious.

Meng Hao gaped. This was the second time Chen Fan had brought up the matter. Meng Hao had a strange feeling about this trip to the Song Clan.

Time passed, and soon a beam of light appeared in the sky, a few dozen meters wide. In an instant, it had reached them, and an old man appeared, wearing a voluminous Daoist robe. His face was ruddy, and he had a full head of long, white hair. He carried a gourd of alcohol in his hand, and strapped to his back was a huge pitch-black sword.

He had a brandy nose, and his entire body emanated the smell of alcohol. His robe was wrinkled and messy. He burped.

“Greetings, Elder Fan!” said Chen Fan and the others, immediately clasping hands in salute. Meng Hao also bowed his head and clasped hands in greeting.

“Alright, you little brats. Let’s see if any of you are lucky enough to take that Song girl in marriage and bring honor to the ancestors of the Solitary Sword Sect....” The old man’s sonorous voice echoed out, shaking Meng

Hao, and even the very ground, it seemed.

When he said the words “bring honor to the ancestors,” his voice grew especially loud, causing the gray-robed man to open his eyes and then slowly shake his head. He seemed to find the wording somewhat inappropriate. However, he said nothing.

“He’s definitely not a Core Formation Cultivator,” thought Meng Hao, taking a deep breath. He had seen Nascent Soul eccentrics before, and it seemed... that’s exactly what this man was! Nascent Soul stage!

Chen Fan stepped forward. Raising hands again in a respectful salute, he said, “Elder Fan, this is a disciple from my former Sect, my Junior Brother who....”

“Got it. No problem! Don’t forget to bring me a few jugs of your master’s alcohol when we get back.” The old man clapped Chen Fan on the shoulder. He glanced at Meng Hao, and then strode forward toward the teleportation portal.

Meng Hao hesitated for a moment and then said, “Elder Brother, this trip to the Song Clan....”

Chen Fan hurriedly replied. “The Song Clan has an urgent need for a son-in-law, so they’ve invited the five Sects and two Clans to visit. Little Junior Brother, if you play your cards right, you might have a chance. Whether you join the Solitary Sword Sect, or become a member of the Song Clan, you will soon have a proper foundation upon which to practice Cultivation.” He grabbed Meng Hao’s sleeve and dragged him toward the teleportation portal.

Meng Hao was hesitant for a moment, and then made his decision. “The people from the Solitary Sword Sect are here, so I can’t try to get the meat jelly to help me change my appearance. This isn’t really working out how I want it to. Oh well, once we get to the Song Clan, I’ll think of an excuse to get away.”

# Chapter 186: Another Encounter with Wang Tengfei

The Song Clan was one of the three great Clans of the Southern Domain, and was somewhat isolated in its position. It had a history stretching back tens of thousands of years, and was deeply rooted in the society of the Southern Domain. It existed on the edge of a wide plain which contained some rolling hills, but few mountains.

In the southeast of the plain, however, was a mountain range called Neck of Heaven, under which flowed a river. Look down on it from the sky, and it had the appearance of a woman resting her head on her arm. It was quite pretty and charming.

The Song Clan was situated atop the chain of mountains. It was different from other Clans. Its main gate was actually an ancient castle, connected to which was an enormous wall that snaked throughout the various surrounding mountains, creating a very spectacular sight.

As for the castle of the capital city, it was pitch black and had the appearance of an enormous wild beast, filled with indescribable ferocity. Anyone who saw it for the first time would be left with the impression that the Song Clan was not to be provoked.

The capital city was surrounded by eighty-one smaller cities, which were constructed according to the rise and fall of the mountains. Each city was densely populated by Clan members.

In the sky above the Song Clan was an enormous rotating Sun and Moon. When it was pitch black in the outside world, the sun blazed in the Song Clan. When it was bright and sunny outside, the moon shone in the Song Clan.

This Sun and Moon was a precious treasure of the Song Clan.

Every great Sect and Clan possessed some valuable treasure. Only in this way could their continued status and glory be maintained.

For example, the Black Sieve Sect had their incense burner, and the

Solitary Sword Sect its enormous sword. They were all precious treasures. As for the Song Clan, the sun and moon which hung in their sky enveloped the entire Clan, transforming it into a different world than what existed outside.

It was likely because of this treasure that for so many years, the Song Clan had not experienced any friction with outside Sects and Clans, and held such a lofty position. They did not provoke others, and others did not dare to provoke them.

The Song Clan was not as powerful as the Solitary Sword Sect, nor as mysterious of the Blood Demon Sect. It was not as extravagant as the Violet Fate Sect, nor did they have a vast array of magics like the Golden Frost Sect. They were not as erudite as the Black Sieve Sect, either.

Amongst the three great Clans, the Song Clan maintained the lowest profile. Their Dao Children did not perform sensational acts, nor did the Clan struggle for glory. They were relatively quiet. What they did have, though, was information, collected over many, many years.

They did not provoke others, and others did not dare to provoke them!

The mountains they occupied left others with a profound impression. If incredible change rocked the Southern Domain in the future, other Sects and Clans might very well collapse. The one organization that was most likely to remain was the Song Clan.

The degree of their inconspicuousness was such that people knew almost nothing about them. This in turn created a sense of fear and terror.

In the past few hundred years, the only person to venture out of the Song Clan was Eccentric Song 1, who everyone in the Southern Domain knew about. He had an odd personality, and enjoyed the collection of wild beasts. His occasional excursions gave him plenty of opportunities to interact with other Sects and Clans.

At this moment within the Song Clan capital city, dazzling lights flickered and people bustled about preparing for an ancient tradition of the Song Clan.

Women of the Song Clan were not permitted to marry outsiders. Instead, a husband would be sought from the outside, who would then marry into the family. Upon marriage, the new son-in-law would then become a Conclave Cultivator of the Song Clan.

Throughout the years, many Sects had desired to infiltrate the Song Clan. However, because of their strange and ancient marriage custom, those Sects had long since vanished. The Song Clan, however... still remained.

Of course, there were problems with the arrangement....

Song Jia 2 stood quietly at the window, looking out. The outside world was awash with sunlight, but inside the Song Clan, the sky was dark. Wind blew against her face, lifting up her hair and revealing her spectacular beauty. Right now, she wore a sad look and seemed to be apprehensive.

Her apprehension was because of her fate as a woman of the Song Clan. She felt melancholy for the same reason. There was nothing she could do to resist; it was useless to struggle. The Song Clan's rules had been laid down by the ancestors, and could not be changed.

The soft voice of a woman could be heard from behind her. "We're different from the other Sects and Clans. As a girl of the Song Clan, it's impossible to maintain your purity forever. You can't change that, nor can I." The voice belonged to a middle-aged woman who gazed affectionately at Song Jia.

Song Jia didn't reply.

After a while, though, she nodded. In her mind, images appeared from the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament. She remembered looking on helplessly as her Blood Phoenix died. She could only watch through tear-filled eyes as it faded away.

"Perhaps it's just my fate." Her face filled with exhaustion. The exhaustion did not mar her good looks; in fact, it seemed to give birth to a tender beauty.

The woman behind her could sense what Song Jia was feeling. She



stepped forward and stroked Song Jia's long, beautiful hair. "It is fate," she said. "But it's not destiny, it's a mission. A mission from the Song Clan of the Southern Domain. 3"

"The destruction of the Southern Domain. Gather a hundred Clans. Fuse their bloodlines. Evade the palace of the Heavens...." Song Jia murmured the words which she had heard people recite ever since she was young. "But father said that no power within the entire Southern Domain could bring about its complete destruction. Nothing in the Eastern Lands could do so either." She looked back at the middle-aged woman.

"That's a legend which has existed since ancient times. Mother doesn't know what it means either."

Mother and daughter were silent for a while after that.

Meanwhile, outside of the Song Clan, the sun blazed brightly in the sky. On the plains below the Song Clan, a glittering light shined out, which grew in intensity over the space of about ten breaths. Then, it gradually disappeared, revealing a dozen or more people.

Meng Hao sucked in a deep breath and rubbed the bridge of his nose. It seemed his body wasn't really suited for teleportation. He looked around and immediately noticed that up ahead existed a world of darkness. There was a huge mountain range, hanging over which was... a moon.

He gaped at the bizarre sight.

Next to him, Chen Fan sighed with emotion. "We're in Song Clan territory now. It's my first time here, but I've heard people talk of how astonishing the Song Clan is."

The old man lifted his gourd of alcohol and took a drink. Then he let out a loud burp and laughed heartily. His laughter filled the air, after which several beams of light shot out from the darkness of the Song Clan.

"Brandy Nose!" said a voice from within the approaching beams of light. It didn't sound pleased. "How come the Solitary Sword Sect sent you? I can smell the stench of alcohol coming off of you from here!"

"Eccentric Song! How could I not come? This old Daoist is going to drink

his fill before he leaves!” The old man suddenly shot up into the air.

Meng Hao took a deep breath. The words ‘Eccentric Song’ filled him with fear. He looked up into the sky and could just make out the image of Song Clan members within the beams of light. One of them was an old man who, although Meng Hao had never seen before, he immediately knew was the same Eccentric Song from that time in the State of Zhao.

“I just arrived and already ran into him,” thought Meng Hao. “I can’t stay here long... if Eccentric Song finds out I’m here, the consequences will be terrible....” Meng Hao was just about to try to sneak off when Chen Fan grabbed him.

“Little Junior Brother, did you see? I’m not sure the name of that member of the elder generation, but I heard everyone calls him Eccentric Song. They say he has a very bizarre personality, and that he owns tons of wild beasts. He also likes to make bets with other Sects all the time....”

Meng Hao interrupted him with a forced smile, “Elder Brother, I really can’t proceed any further, I have to....” Before Meng Hao could finish speaking, the old man from the Solitary Sword Sect and Eccentric Song suddenly started yelling at each other.

“Your Song Clan is entirely too stingy! Ten Thousand Trees Mountain only has a single pearl as the reward? What good is a crappy pearl!? That’s the prize that my Solitary Sword Sect kids are supposed to fight for? No way!”

“It’s a Cubic Pearl that can dispel even the strangest poisons in the world,” replied Eccentric Song. “It’s a treasure refined by the Sun and Moon of the Song Clan. It can only be given as a gift to a son-in-law of the Song Clan. Even if you wanted it, you couldn’t have it. Besides, what treasures could possibly compare to a girl of the Song Clan? Your granny! Are you Solitary Sword Sect people here because of the search for a son-in-law, or just to grab treasures?!”

Hearing this exchange, Meng Hao’s eyes flickered. Next to him, Chen Fan frowned.

“Little Junior Brother, you should really think things through,” he said

earnestly. "You'll be able to make a lot of friends here. Li Fugui will be here too, and you haven't seen him for years. However, if you truly must leave, then Elder Brother won't stop you."

Meng Hao lowered his head thoughtfully for a moment, then looked up and smiled.

"Fine, since I'm here, I might as well check things out."

Chen Fan smiled in return. He clapped Meng Hao on the shoulder and was just about to continue speaking when another blinding light appeared. It spread out, attracting the attention of everyone, including Eccentric Song and the old man from the Solitary Sword Sect.

The glowing light spread out, and within, the figures of dozens of people gradually grew distinct. Meng Hao's eyes glittered, and Chen Fan frowned.

These were people from the Wang Clan.

The group was comprised of both men and women. They looked around after they appeared, and their eyes were especially drawn to the mountain chain in the distance, upon which the Song Clan was situated.

At the front of this group of people was an old man whose face was covered with a tranquil expression. He strode forward, looking up at Eccentric Song and the old man from the Solitary Sword Sect.

"Fellow Daoist Fan," he said, "you arrived quickly. Could it be that you caught a whiff of the Song Clan's alcohol, causing you to arrive faster than everyone else?"

Elder Fan laughed and took a swig of alcohol. "I'm not that fast. At least, I'm not as fast as Fellow Daoist Wang was that time back at the Rebirth Cave. The speed and beauty of your retreat were incredible."

The old man from the Wang Clan smiled. He didn't respond, but clasped his hands and gave a slight bow to Eccentric Song.

Behind him were various members of the Wang Clan, including Wang Tengfei 4 He wore a white robe, along with a cold expression and a slight, grim frown. It seemed as if he were thinking about something important.

His features were handsome, his disposition perfect. Everything melded together to give him an air of flawlessness.

Standing next to him was Wang Xifan 5. His expression was proud and aloof as he gazed at the Song Clan mountains. Then his gaze shifted to the group from the Solitary Sword Sect. He frowned when he caught sight of Meng Hao.

“He looks a bit familiar...” His gaze passed by before he could recall who Meng Hao was. However, it was at this moment that Wang Tengfei’s surprised eyes fell onto Meng Hao. A look of disbelief appeared.

Meng Hao looked back at him. They were in different groups of people, hundreds of meters away from each other, and yet their gazes locked.

Just like they had years ago in the Reliance Sect!

1. Eccentric Song was the guy with the treasure mountain which Meng Hao looted to death. If you want a refresher on that, check out Chapter 48: Eccentric Song and Wu Dingqiu and subsequent chapters ↩
2. Song Jia was one of the other competitors in the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament. Her last appearance was in Chapter 130: The Perfect Foundation!! ↩
3. This part contains a play on words of sorts in Chinese. The characters for fate, destiny, and mission are 命, 命运, and 使命 respectively. As you can see, they all share the same component, the character 命, which can have different meanings depending on the context or the other characters it’s paired with. ↩
4. If you want a quick refresher on some key events regarding Wang Tengfei, you can check out Chapter 24: Who was it?!, Chapter 32: This Finger Brought me Humiliation, Today, I Cripple it!, Chapter 33: Is This Sword Yours Too? ↩
5. Wang Xifan is Wang Tengfei’s Dao Protector, who almost killed Meng Hao. He was introduced in Chapter 35: I’m Not Willing! and also appeared in Chapter 119: The Legacy Shocks the Southern Domain ↩

# Chapter 187: Good Old Fatty

“Meng Hao!” thought Wang Tengfei, his eyes instantly shining with a mysterious glow. He felt a sudden stab of pain from the index finger of his right hand. The finger was pitch black, and inside curling wisps of black Qi could be seen.

Seeing Meng Hao here was not something Wang Tengfei had ever imagined would happen. Many years had passed, but he recognized him immediately. This was that damned Cultivator from the State of Zhao who had stolen away his legacy and wrecked all of his meticulously laid plans!

As soon as he saw Meng Hao, Wang Tengfei’s breath quickened. He had assumed that Meng Hao disappeared along with the State of Zhao. How could he have predicted that he would suddenly appear here? Furthermore, he was in a group from the Solitary Sword Sect. Many thoughts ran through his head during the space of a few breaths. Then he recovered his composure and looked away.

“Since he’s here,” thought Wang Tengfei, “I’ll have to find an opportunity to sacrifice him to my poison finger.” His expression calm, he slowly began to exhibit the same disregard for Meng Hao that he had years ago. It was as if he would eternally be above Meng Hao. It didn’t matter if they were in the State of Zhao or the Southern Domain. He didn’t care at all about Meng Hao. He was a member of the Wang Clan. He was Chosen. He was superior, and as for Meng Hao, it didn’t matter what relationship he had with the Solitary Sword Sect. To him, Meng Hao was nothing more than an insect.

He had perfect good looks and a flawless temperament. He stood there, slowly becoming the center of attention. He smiled lightly, his expression indifferent. The disregard for Meng Hao which existed in his heart slowly transformed into scorn and arrogance. He tilted his head up, and it appeared, for all intents and purposes, that Meng Hao was nothing to him and could be crushed on a whim.

At the same time, Wang Xifan frowned slightly. He looked at Meng Hao

again, and a mysterious look appeared in his eyes. A smile tugged at the corners of his mouth. It was a smile similar to Wang Tengfei's, filled with scorn in disregard.

Now he remembered the scene from years ago. He remembered this ant that he almost crushed on the top of the East Mountain of the Reliance Sect, only to be stopped by He Luohua.

"Interesting," he said with a chuckle. His words did not echo out, and could only be heard by Wang Tengfei. "So, we once again run into this insolent kid. Tengfei, now is your chance to conclude matters from all those years ago. Kill him, and prove that everything I've told you is true. You are Chosen, and he is nothing more than an insect."

Wang Tengfei smiled. "I've long since stopped thinking about the things that happened that year," he said coolly. "However, I really should take his head." He looked at Meng Hao once again, and his eyes brimmed with confidence in his ability to kill him. It would be as easy as turning over his hand. He looked away, ignoring Meng Hao and staring off into the distance. He appeared thoughtful once again, as if he were wrestling with some matter in his heart.

"Don't overthink things," said Wang Xifan, his voice low. "You need to trust Chu Yuyan."

Wang Tengfei was quiet for a long moment, then growled, "If I ever find out who it was, I'll tear him into a thousand pieces!!" His eyes were filled with cold, callous hatred, as well as humiliation. Killing intent roiled out of him, much more intense than when he had seen Meng Hao. This matter was something he could not ignore, something he could not cool down from.

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever. Seeing Wang Tengfei here wasn't completely unexpected. However, it naturally caused various emotions to bubble up within him.

The enmity between him and Wang Tengfei was not something he cared much about any more. Years had passed, and as of now, Meng Hao actually felt that he had been a bit too hot-blooded in his youth. There

were definitely some areas in which he was in the wrong.

Now, Meng Hao's Cultivation base was at the mid Foundation Establishment stage, and his battle prowess put him in the same league as Dao Children, although few people knew that. In Meng Hao's estimation, if he could defeat Wang Tengfei when in the Qi Condensation stage, then nowadays it wasn't even worth thinking about.

What concerned him most was the Song Clan's search for a husband, and the Cubic Pearl that Eccentric Song had mentioned moments ago. It could dispel the strangest poisons in the world, and that made Meng Hao's heart palpitate with eagerness.

He wasn't sure if the Cubic Pearl could dispel the poison of the Resurrection Lily, but considering the Song Clan was offering it up as a prize, it was surely no ordinary object.

"I wonder if it really can dispel the poison.... If it can, then maybe I won't need to infiltrate the Violet Fate Sect after all. Staying in the Solitary Sword Sect wouldn't be bad." His heart pounded in anticipation. As he traveled the path of Cultivation, his next big hurdle would be Core Formation. That was a difficult bridge to cross, and joining a powerful Sect would surely help.

After a long moment of thought, his eyes filled with determination.

Up above, Eccentric Song, Elder Fan, and the Nascent Soul Cultivator from the Wang Clan turned into beams of prismatic light that shot toward the darkness which surrounded the Song Clan.

Two other Song Clan members had come out with Eccentric Song. They split, one walking toward the Solitary Sword Sect's group, the other to the Wang Clan's group.

They clasped hands and bowed. Smiling, they said, "Fellow Daoists of the Solitary Sword Sect and Wang Clan, please follow us. We will enter the mountains of the Song Clan together."

Everyone flew up into the air. Various members of the Solitary Sword Sect and the Wang Clan were obviously acquainted. The two groups

merged into a larger group. Talking and laughing could be heard as they transformed into beams of light and shot toward the Song Clan.

Meng Hao and Chen Fan were on the edge of the group, some distance away from the Wang Clan Cultivators. Wang Tengfei flew along, expression cold. He frowned, apparently too busy being lost in thought to pay any attention to Meng Hao.

They flew at high speed, and very soon reached the area where the brightness of the outside world gave way to the darkness of the Song Clan. The instant they entered, Meng Hao's heart leaped. He had just discovered a major difference between the outside world, and the Song Clan. The spiritual energy here... could be felt and absorbed!!

This unexpected turn of events shook Meng Hao's mind and heart. Of course, after all his years of practicing Cultivation, he was able to prevent his feelings from showing on his face. His expression was the same as ever.

"So it turns out... I can absorb spiritual energy in this place! This is the perfect location for me to practice Cultivation!" This discovery exceeded the entirety of Meng Hao's imagination. He was just preparing to circulate his Cultivation base and begin to absorb spiritual energy when a thought flashed through his mind, and he stopped.

One of the tools which Meng Hao had developed after escaping all the various snares and traps throughout the years, was caution. Therefore, he would be cautious here, too.

He looked around and soon began to pick up on some clues. As the Solitary Sword Sect disciples flew forward, frowns appeared on their faces.

"So, we can't absorb the spiritual energy here..." Chen Fan whispered to him. "I heard before that the Song Clan is strange, and that certainly seems true. Apparently, only members of the Song Clan can do breathing exercises here to absorb spiritual energy. Other Sects and Clans are unable to. It's not that spiritual energy is forbidden here, it's that we can't absorb it."

A bit more time passed. Seeing all the mountains and cities filled with



Cultivators pass by beneath him, Meng Hao was filled with a sense of mystery. After passing scores of mountains, they reached the Song Clan's capital city.

Within the capital city was an enormous square. Already, many Cultivators from outside the Song Clan had arrived there. Present were members of the Golden Frost Sect and the Blood Demon Sect.

The place was alive with activity, and the hubbub of conversations filled the air.

Even before the Solitary Sword Sect and Wang Clan Cultivators could land, a loud voice drifted up into the air. "It's absolutely, one hundred percent true. I, Zhou Daya 1, saw everything with my own eyes. That day, Chu Yuyan wasn't wearing proper clothing. She was wearing a man's garment! Furthermore, she seemed to be on very intimate terms with the male Cultivator. You all don't believe me? I, Zhou Daya, swear an oath that if my words are in any way false, you can gouge my eyes out!"

The person talking was a young Cultivator. He was speaking so passionately that spit flew out of his mouth. He gazed at the surrounding Song Clan members with exuberant, shining eyes. As he spoke, he gesticulated wildly and jumped up and down. The dozens of surrounded Song Clan members watched on in astonishment.

The Cultivators from the Blood Demon Sect were situated off to the side. They sat there quietly, cross-legged, and in their midst was a Li Shiqi 2, dressed in a white robe!

Sitting cross-legged next to Li Shiqi were two people. One was Sang Luo's brother, and the other was none other than Wang Youcai 3!

Wang Youcai was looking quietly at the group of people from the Golden Frost Sect. In their midst was a rather fat fellow whose face had a few pimples on it. He wasn't very tall, and at the moment he was smiling complacently at Zhou Daya. This was none other than Li Fugui.

When the two of them had run into each other earlier, Fatty found, to his surprise, that Wang Youcai responded coldly to his attempts to start a conversation and even pretended not to know him. At the moment, he

wasn't sure what to think, and could only sigh inwardly.

"You simply can't imagine the expression on Chu Yuyan's face," continued Zhou Daya. "I guess you can only say that it was wonderful. And that male Cultivator, well, he was extraordinarily handsome, a dragon amongst men. Really. They embraced each other and exchanged some sweet words. As their hands groped each other frantically, they began to pant...." As he spoke, Zhou Daya got more excited.

Li Fugui suddenly cleared his throat and spoke out in a loud and clear voice. "I can bear witness to this," he said, "as I was also present. Ai, at first I planned to go give them a piece of my mind. As all of you Fellow Daoists are well aware, Fellow Daoist Chu Yuyan is the beloved of Fellow Daoist Wang Tengfei. And of course, Fellow Daoist Wang Tengfei and I are the closest of friends.

"Therefore, when I saw what was happening, I wanted to speak my mind. However.... Ai, you have no way to know how the two of them looked. It was clear that the feelings between them, were true love." As his voice rang out, the faces of the Song Clan members all filled with strange expressions.

They knew Fatty, of course. He was a member of the Golden Frost Sect that no one dared to provoke. He was a treasure of the Sect, and as such, his level of seniority was extremely high. Anyone who offended him would arouse the wrath of the entire Golden Frost Sect. To do so would be similar to rubbing a cat's hair backward.

This was because the Golden Frost Sect had eighteen bloodline legacies. By combining their power, the Sect could wield the power of a great Dao Reserve spell. According to the rumors, the power of this spell was so incredible that it could slay Immortals!

However, for many years, the Sect only possessed seventeen of the bloodlines. The last one had disappeared, and no matter how hard the Golden Frost Sect searched, it could not be found. There was no one who the legacy could be passed onto. Therefore, for many years, the ultimate power of the Golden Frost Sect's spell could not be unleashed. However, it

turned out Li Fugui was perfectly suited to accept the legacy. Therefore, he was treated as a treasure of the Sect. Usually, the Sect Priest would treat him very amiably and was very protective of him. You could essentially say that the entire Sect was at his beck and call.

Furthermore... Fatty didn't like to practice Cultivation, nor did he want an assigned Dao Protector. So to protect him....

Whenever he went out, a large group of Golden Frost Sect disciples would accompany him. The Sect was extremely worried that something might happen to him. The most extreme thing that had happened was that once after someone provoked Li Fugui, the Sect Priest personally slaughtered an entire Sect. Afterwards, he issued a proclamation in the Southern Domain that anyone who dared to even touch Li Fugui would provoke the unbridled fury of the entire Golden Frost Sect.

1. Zhou Daya, of course, is the guy who saw Meng Hao and Chu Yuyan together, which happened in Chapter 136: Zhou Daya! ↩
2. Li Shiqi is the Blood Demon Sect Dao Child who appeared in Chapter 175: Li Shiqi ↩
3. Wang Youcai was one of the group of four young people brought to the Reliance Sect in Chapter 1. The others in the group were Meng Hao, 'Fatty' Li Fugui, and 'Little Tiger' Dong Hu. Wang Youcai's last appearance was in Chapter 130: The Perfect Foundation!! ↩

# Chapter 188: True Love is Priceless

Actually, Li Fugui was diametrically opposed to Wang Tengfei, and wouldn't let him off the hook for anything. Normally, whether he was inside the Sect or outside, he constantly said sarcastic things about him.

This, of course, made Wang Tengfei furious. However, there was nothing he could do about it. Offending Li Fugui was not an option. Their feud was a trifling matter of the junior generation. Furthermore, Li Fugui was too important to the Golden Frost Sect. The difference between Li Fugui's importance to the Golden Frost Sect and Wang Teng Fei's importance to the Wang clan, was immeasurable.

Fatty suddenly leaped up onto the table, to the embarrassment of his fellow Golden Frost Sect members. They could do little more than cough lightly and watch as he cried out, "Ah, true love. Fellow Daoists, could I really not see such a thing? It was definitely true love. How could I, Li Fugui, do anything to split apart such an affectionate couple? Would I really do that, just for my good-for-nothing friend Wang Tengfei? Would I really disturb a scene of true love? Never! I could never do such a thing!

"There's a saying which speaks of a love that can transcend something-or-other, I forgot. Anyway, someone told me something once. Actually, it was the best friend I've ever had, the person I admire most in the world. He told me that love is the most valuable thing in the world, worth more than even millions of Spirit Stones!" As he spoke, his mouthful of extraordinarily large teeth became visible. In the end, he began to choke up and started to cry aloud.

Seeing this caused the Song Clan members to smile wryly. The Blood Demon Sect Cultivators eyed Fatty with strange expressions.

Li Shiqi frowned, but didn't say anything. Wang Youcai also maintained his silence, although a slight smile appeared on his face.

"Therefore," continued Fatty, growing more and more excited, "I pretended that I didn't even see them. However, it left me with the feeling that Wang Tengfei is really a useless nobody. Furthermore, he's

completely shameless. Anyone could see that it was true love. Were I in Wang Tengfei's place, I would simply smile, and hand over the beauty.

"That unknown Cultivator, in terms of appearance, of Cultivation base, of everything, is clearly above and beyond Wang Tengfei. Sadly..."

Suddenly, an infuriated shout could be heard from mid-air.

"LI FUGUI!!!" Killing intent roiled out from Wang Tengfei as he shot out from the group floating in the air. His entire body was like a sharpened sword slicing toward Li Fugui.

Before he could get very close, the Golden Frost Sect disciples behind Li Fugui leaped up with amazing speed. In the blink of an eye, they shot forward. One of them, a tall, strapping man, let out a cold harrumph and formed a fist, which he lifted into the air. Ripples spread out from it in all directions, and a roaring sound filled the air. Wang Tengfei's facial expression flickered.

Wang Xifan exploded out with incredible speed. In an instant, he was in front of Wang Tengfei, waving both hands out forward.

A boom echoed out. The blood drained from Wang Xifan's face as he grabbed Wang Tengfei and retreated backward. He glanced back murderously at the large man from the Golden Frost Sect.

"Members of the Wang Clan, please conduct yourself with dignity," said the large man coolly. The power of his Core Formation Cultivation base rolled out.

The group of people Meng Hao was a part of descended to the ground. Meng Hao had a strange expression on his face, and he coughed lightly. He looked at Fatty hiding behind the large man. The things Fatty had been saying were somewhat embarrassing, and left Meng Hao feeling a little guilty.

"Do you see?" said Chen Fan quietly. "Li Fugui is no small figure in the Golden Frost Sect. Now that I think about it, Wang Tengfei's current situation really is deserving of sympathy. Little Junior Brother, have you seen Chu Yuyan? Ai, I'm really curious which Sect that Cultivator is from

who got entangled with Fellow Daoist Chu Yuyan....”

“Uh... yeah I saw her before....” said Meng Hao hesitantly, not sure of what else to say.

Chen Fan sighed. “I really hope I have a chance to meet that guy one day. He must be brilliant to be able to snatch Chu Yuyan away right out from under Wang Tengfei’s nose. Ah, such skill. He must truly be a man of character.”

“Such skill, such skill....” Meng Hao felt even more guilty. Lowering his head, he slowly edged backward. At the same time, he looked over the crowd. He suddenly noticed Wang Youcai, and he stared in shock. Wang Youcai sat there taciturnly, avoiding Meng Hao’s eyes.

“Wang Tengfei, do you really dare to attack me?” said Fatty, sticking his head out from behind the large man and pointing at Wang Tengfei. “Your granny!” he roared. “You truly dare to attack me? According to the rules of seniority of the five Sects and three Clans, I’m your Master Uncle. Do you actually dare to bully your seniors?!” Fatty slapped his bag of holding to produce a Spirit Stone, which he popped into his mouth. Crunching sounds echoed out as he crushed it into bits. It was quite a ferocious sight.

After crushing the Spirit Stone to pieces, Fatty extended his hand. With a wry smile, the big man produced a jade bottle which he handed over to Fatty. Fatty popped it into his mouth.

“Li Fugui, you are too excessive!” Wang Tengfei ground his teeth. Even as the words left his mouth, Fatty closed his eyes.

“What exists between them is true love,” he said. “Do you understand what true love is? True love exists between your wife Chu Yuyan and another man. I’ve seen it with my own eyes. Why would you possibly interfere with that?!” People around started to laugh, causing Wang Tengfei’s face to grow even more enraged. “If only you understood. Ah, true love. It’s priceless! I truly admire that Fellow Daoist. He’s so skilled. He truly handled things masterfully....” As Fatty went on with his speech, Meng Hao continued to edge backward. However, he wasn’t fast enough. He suddenly noticed that Zhou Daya was staring directly at him, a look of

disbelief and astonishment covering his face.

Meng Hao's heart began to thump. Although he had intentionally set this thing in motion, he had never imagined he would see a scene such as that playing out today. He wanted to hide, but suddenly, Zhou Daya's raised his voice.

"It's him!!" he shouted, pointing directly at Meng Hao, seemingly afraid people wouldn't recognize him. "It's him! That's the Cultivator who I saw with Chu Yuyan!!"

Zhou Daya really did live up to his name, which means 'big mouth.' Not only did he like to gossip, he also had a very loud voice. His voice rang out clearly, causing everyone's attention to instantly follow the line of his finger to fall onto Meng Hao.

Meng Hao's face flickered. The surrounding Solitary Sword Sect disciples stared at him in shock and unconsciously edged away from him. Soon, he and Chen Fan stood there alone.

Chen Fan was also gaping numbly at Meng Hao. He recovered his composure quickly, however, in the end, also quickly edged away. He didn't want any misunderstandings to result from standing next to Meng Hao. If anyone tried to bully Meng Hao, he would leap to assist in an instant; but what was occurring right now was a romantic love scandal....

As he edged backward, Chen Fan's eyes began to glow brightly. A look of both disbelief and admiration filled them.

As Zhou Daya pointed at Meng Hao, all of the Solitary Sword Sect disciples stared at him, as did the Cultivators from the Wang Clan, the Song Clan and the Blood Demon Sect. Everyone was looking at Meng Hao.

Li Shiqi from the Blood Demon Sect had a strange expression on her face. She had noticed Meng Hao moments ago. At the moment, she snorted, turning her head to ignore him. Wang Youcai stared in shock at Meng Hao.

As for Wang Tengfei, he stood there mutely, glaring at Meng Hao. Veins began to bulge out on his face, and veins of blood appeared in his eyes. He

thought back to the Flying Rain-Dragon legacy, to the Reliance Inner Sect training. He thought back to his feelings in the Flying Rain Dragon's cave. His humiliation and rage billowed up to the heavens.

Everything was completely silent. All eyes were on Meng Hao. Of course, in the past days, the rumors about Chu Yuyan being seen with a strange man had been spreading throughout the five great Sects and three great Clans.

It had started in the Golden Frost Sect. Everything about the rumor made sense and was quite vivid. No one knew, and everyone wondered, who the strange man might be. Now here, in front of all these eyes, Meng Hao had been pointed out.

Fatty stared in shock. He stood blankly for a moment, and then rubbed his eyes vigorously. Suddenly, he started to look very excited.

Just as he was about to rush over, a dozen or so colorful beams of light approached from off in the distance. As they whistled down, it was clear that this was the Violet Fate Sect!

Chu Yuyan was not with them, however, there were two people who Meng Hao did recognize. They were none other than Qian Shuihen and Lu Song 1, who were now in the early Foundation Establishment stage.

They flew on either side of a young man with a cool expression. His body radiated the power of late Foundation Establishment, and seemed to occupy a position of great respect amongst the other Violet Fate Sect disciples.

At the same time, ten more beams appeared. This was the Black Sieve Sect. The beautiful Han Bei 2 was among them. She was dressed in men's clothing, but a single glance was enough to see that she was a woman. She was chatting and laughing with a Song Clan member as she flew down to the square.

The arrival of the Violet Fate Sect and Black Sieve Sect would normally cause various members of other Sects to seek out friends and catch up. But a strange atmosphere now filled the air. Most people just glanced momentarily at the new arrivals from the other two Sects.



As soon as Zhou Daya saw more people arriving, he once again cried out, his voice even louder, “It’s him! That’s the Cultivator I saw with Chu Yuyan. She was putting on his clothes....” In actuality, there is a vast difference between ‘wearing his clothes’ and ‘putting on his clothes.’ The Cultivators from the Violet Fate Sect all stopped in their tracks and stared at Meng Hao.

As disciples of the Violet Fate Sect, how could they not be aware of the rumors swirling about regarding Chu Yuyan? As for Qian Shuihen and Lu Song, the instant they caught sight of Meng Hao, their eyes grew wide and they stared in shock. Then their eyes grew hateful.

It had been years since they had seen Meng Hao, but the blow they had received that year was enormous. Even down to this very day, people still talked about what had happened. The events had caused hatred to seep down into their bones. It was the greatest humiliation they had ever experienced in their lives.

Qian Shuihen stared at Meng Hao, and he started breathing heavily. Killing intent began to roil within Lu Song’s eyes.

“Dammit, it’s you!!”

“So, it’s you!!”

The two of them roared, filling the spectators with even more shock. The details of the matter with Chu Yuyan were still not clear, but the intense rage of these two Violet Fate Sect disciples was clearly no joke. They obviously hated Meng Hao down to the marrow of their bones.

1. Qian Shuihen and Lu Song were the guys who paid an exorbitant amount of Spirit Stones and treasures to get Meng Hao’s ordinary iron spear. It happened in Chapter 55: Overbearing ↵
2. Han Bei’s last appearance was in Chapter 164: That Bird’s Qi... ↵

# Chapter 189: All the Enemies Arrive

Meng Hao smiled wryly. The spot he occupied in the square had long since grown empty, making him especially conspicuous. His smile grew more bitter, and he sighed inwardly.

“If I had known things would end up like this,” he thought, “I wouldn’t have let Zhou Daya go.... Ai, are all of my enemies going to appear today...?” He coughed and subconsciously rubbed his nose. He suddenly got the feeling that he’d done a bit too many things over the past few years. Now the moment had arrived in which his crowds of victims were accusing him.

“Damn you, Meng Hao!” howled Qian Shuihen. “I will never forget the matter of the iron spear from that year!” He immediately took a step forward. Next to him, Lu Song’s eyes were red. Throughout the years, the two of them were often derided by fellow Sect members because of the incident with the iron spear. They had often wished to go seek Meng Hao to exact revenge. However, the State of Zhao had disappeared, presumably Meng Hao along with it. They had never imagined that they would encounter him this day. Thoughts of vengeance immediately filled their hearts.

Wang Tengfei also took a step forward, his face filled with murder. “Meng Hao, I already loathed you back in the State of Zhao. You had better provide an explanation about what happened with Chu Yuyan....” Wang Tengfei felt as if he were an object of laughter among the entire current generation of Cultivators of the Southern Domain. It was something he couldn’t accept. He wanted to slay Meng Hao where he stood.

“What a lively scene, Brother Meng,” came a voice from within the Black Sieve Sect disciples. It was Han Bei. “I never imagined I would find you here. So many interesting stories.” She sighed. “Don’t forget the deal you and I made.” She covered her mouth and laughed, winking at Meng Hao. Her words made the audience’s eyes glitter even more brightly.

Meng Hao's appearance seemed to be provoking the interest of one person after another. As of now, all the people who had never heard of him before were becoming intensely interested in the proceedings.

A buzz of conversation filled the air. One voice rose up from within the Blood Demon Sect. It was Li Shiqi. "Fellow Daoist Meng Hao, you really do have a lot of interesting stories to tell! However, I'm curious about what happened to that annoying hat of yours?" It was hard to tell what she was thinking, but her eyes shone with interest.

Chen Fen stood gaping. He took a deep breath as he gazed at Meng Hao, an indescribable admiration growing in his eyes. Fatty looked at Meng Hao excitedly. It seemed that no matter where Meng Hao went, he would attract attention.

It was the same back in the Reliance Sect as it was right here and now.

"No wonder he's the Elder Brother!" thought Fatty, taking a deep breath. His admiration for Meng Hao had reached such heights that he wanted to fall to his knees and bow down.

Meng Hao gave a dry cough and continued to smile bitterly. He really did feel a bit guilty. However, before he could respond to anyone, ten beams of light suddenly appeared off in the distance. It was none other than the Li Clan.

As of now, all five great Sects and the two other great Clans had arrived.

In the middle of the Li Clan people was Li Daoyi 1. His arm had long since been replaced by the Li Clan. He was a Dao Child, so he couldn't marry into the Song Clan. He had obviously not come because of the Song Clan's search for a husband, but rather for some other reason. However, as soon as the Li Clan people touched down into the square, his eyes fell upon Meng Hao.

As soon as they did, he gaped. Almost immediately, his Cultivation base rippled with power, and the Qi of the great circle of late Foundation Establishment filled the square.

"So, you finally appear!!" he said grimly, taking a step toward Meng Hao.

Fierce killing intent emanated from his eyes. It was obvious to everyone that there was some big secret between him and Meng Hao that he wasn't willing to talk about. Of course, their fight in the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament had given birth to enormous enmity that could only be wiped away by death.

To suddenly find Meng Hao here caused Li Daoyi's killing intent to explode outward.

Everyone else in the square who didn't know Meng Hao were now clamoring in excitement and shock at what was happening.

"First it was the matter with Chu Yuyan and then Wang Tengfei's murderous intentions. Then something about the Violet Fate Sect and an iron spear. After that, some agreement between him and Han Bei from the Black Sieve Sect! Next, Li Shiqi from the Blood Demon Sect!! And finally... he's provoked killing intent from the Dao Child of the Li Clan!!"

"How can this guy have gotten involved in so many situations? He seems to have provoked everybody! How come we've never heard of him before?"

"What's going on...? His name is Meng Hao, huh? It seems like he really has the ability to piss people off...."

"Of the five Sects and three Clans, the only ones who aren't involved are the Solitary Sword Sect and the Song Clan. He arrived with the Solitary Sword Sect, so he must not have any issues with them. But what about the Song Clan? He's so good at pissing people off, I wonder if he had any issues with them?"

Amidst the buzz of conversation that filled the square, Fatty let out a roar and charged up to Meng Hao's side, his face filled with excitement.

"Meng Hao, I've missed you to death!" he said. He hugged Meng Hao, tears streaming down his face. Years had passed, and he had grown up quite a bit. He was now much stouter than before.

Meng Hao smiled, although the smile was somewhat bitter. Everything that was happening was actually because of Fatty....

"Meng Hao! You WILL give me an explanation!" Wang Tengfei's face

was extremely grim as he stared at Meng Hao. Wang Tengfei felt as if he were wearing an enormous green hat 2, which filled his heart with indescribable humiliation. He took another step toward Meng Hao.

Li Daoyi also took a step forward. "You still haven't provided an explanation for what happened that day. Now that you're here, you have an opportunity to speak."

"Damn you, Meng Hao, we will resolve our enmity this day!" Qian Shuihen and Lu Song both began to walk toward him.

It seemed chaos would break out at any moment. Meng Hao's eyes glittered. Fatty spun and let out a roar.

"Meng Hao is my brother! Who dares to attack him?!" Hearing this, the Golden Frost Sect disciples exchanged glances and then strode over to stand next to Fatty. The big man from before simply shook his head, choosing not to say anything.

Fatty's sudden appearance next to Meng Hao caused Wang Tengfei to frown.

Chen Fan strode forward. "Meng Hao is my little Junior Brother. Fellow Daoists, if you insist on acting this way, then I, Chen Fan, must also take my stand." Suddenly, his flying dagger appeared.

The addition of Chen Fan caused Qian and Lu from the Violet Fate Sect to hesitate.

Han Bei moved forward with a laugh. "Brother Meng, considering our friendship, how could I not join you as well?"

Without a single word, Wang Youcai stood up in the midst of the Blood Demon Sect Cultivators and walked over to stand next to Meng Hao.

Lie Shiqi's cold voice rang out next. "Your hat is incredibly annoying. However, for the sake of my Junior Brother Wang Youcai, the Blood Demon Sect will also stand by you. Let's see who dares to touch you this day."

The crowd of people surrounding Meng Hao caused Li Daoyi's brow to

furrow. It was a delicate situation. In actuality, there could not be any killing on this day and place, considering they were in the Song Clan.

Also, he had never imagined Meng Hao would have so many powerful connections. The Golden Frost Sect. The Solitary Sword Sect. The Blood Demon Sect. The Black Sieve Sect. People from all of these Sects supported him.

Wang Tengfei's eyes shone with a cold light as he glared murderously at Meng Hao. Shock filled his heart. How could he ever have predicted that this former disciple of the Reliance Sect could have accumulated such influence?

There was Chen Fan and Li Fugui. Add to that Han Bei from the Black Sieve Sect and Li Shiqi from the Blood Demon Sect. Who knew why they all supported him, but without uttering a single word, Meng Hao had suddenly made it impossible for anyone to attack him.

Qian Shuihen and Lu Song were suddenly very nervous. They, too, could never have imagined that after all these years, Meng Hao would reappear in such a fashion, with such connections.

The entire square grew silent, and it was at this moment than an impatient voice suddenly could be heard from off in the distance.

"What are you kids up to? What's riled everyone up? Everybody simmer down! The Song Clan is throwing a feast to search for a husband, why is everyone stirring up trouble?!" The voice belonged to Eccentric Song, who was accompanied by the eccentric members of the other Sects and Clans.

Smiles covered their faces, and they obviously didn't care about what was happening.

The appearance of the old-timers caused the tension in the square to begin to dissipate. Everyone began to return to their original positions. As they did, Meng Hao lowered his head and began to walk away with Chen Fan. Suddenly, Eccentric Song's eyes fell upon Meng Hao.

"Hold on!" he said.

Meng Hao froze, sighing inwardly. With a silent, bitter laugh, he turned

to face Eccentric Song. His mind spun as he tried to think of a way out of the situation. He placed his hand on his bag of holding. If necessary, he would try to use the good luck charm to escape.

“Kid, why do you look so familiar...?” Eccentric Song’s brow furrowed.

“Elder Song, sir,” cried Lu Song, “this is the person from the State of Zhao with the iron spear!!”

As soon as he heard the word, Eccentric Song’s eyes went wide. He stared at Meng Hao.

“So, it’s you, you little brat!!”

When they heard the words, the surrounding Cultivators gasped. Previously they thought that the Song Clan was the only one Meng Hao hadn’t offended. One and all looked at Meng Hao with admiration in their eyes.

Meng Hao hadn’t managed to offend someone from the junior generation of the Song Clan, but instead, a Nascent Soul eccentric!

Meng Hao smiled, clasping his hands and bowing toward Eccentric Song.

“Meng Hao of the junior generation extends greetings to Master Song of the elder generation. Sir, your Cultivation Base is extraordinary, your demeanor Heavenly in nature. That year, I of the junior generation, was ignorant and foolish. Sir, you have noble character and sterling integrity, I truly hope that on this joyous occasion for the Song Clan, you will not cause difficulties for the junior generation.”

Eccentric Song gave Meng Hao a long, meaningful look. Although he didn’t say anything, sometimes, you can speak volumes without saying a single word. Wang Tengfei’s eyes glittered, and he took another step toward Meng Hao.

“Elder Song,” he said. “There is enmity between I of the junior generation and this person. He humiliated my intended beloved. In the presence of all the various Fellow Daoists, I implore you to permit me to put an end to the enmity this day!”

Meanwhile, in the towering castle in the Song Clan capital city, Song Jia was looking at a glittering screen upon which played out the scene from down below.

A smile covered her face, and it seemed she was paying close attention to Meng Hao's scholarly figure.

"What an interesting person," she said with a laugh. "How could he possibly have offended so many people, even Uncle?"

The middle-aged woman standing next to her also laughed, and a warm expression appeared on her face. "Why, have you taken a fancy to him?"

1. Li Daoyi's last appearance was in Chapter 134: Eighth Demon Sealing Hex! ↩
2. As I mentioned in a previous footnote, the green hat is a symbol in Chinese culture which implies you're being cheated on. More information here ↩



# Chapter 190: Respected Senior

“No,” said Song Jia quickly, her face reddening a bit. She was innately beautiful, and had a tender personality.

The woman next to her laughed, looking at her lovingly. She didn’t say anything.

Her voice light, Song Jia continued, “I just think he’s interesting. He offended so many people, and yet so many people are willing to stand by his side. Also, he doesn’t really look like a Cultivator. He looks more like a scholar.”

The middle-aged woman laughed again, and her expression grew even more gentle. She lifted her right hand, and a flaming jade slip appeared. It burned into nothing, and suddenly, a slight tremble ran through all of the mountains in the Song Clan. The tremble was so minor that anyone under the Nascent Soul stage wouldn’t notice it. Up in the dark sky, the moon shimmered.

Within the moon, countless magical symbols appeared that seemed to be deducing matters pertaining to both the past and the future. After a long moment, they faded away. It was then that in front of the middle-aged woman, time seemed to move in reverse. The jade slip seemed to unburn as it reappeared in front of her.

Song Jia watched this happen, not with surprise, but with anticipation.

“Alright,” said the woman, pressing her finger onto the jade slip. “Let me take a look at the past of this person you find so interesting.”

As soon as she pushed down on the jade slip, it projected a screen into the air. On it could be seen a small county, and a boy sitting next to a window. He was reading a scroll by lamplight.

As he read, he slowly shook his head and fanned himself with a feather fan. It was obviously summer.

The boy was none other than Meng Hao.

The screen flickered, and Meng Hao was now wearing a neat, clean

scholar's robe. He walked out of his house and stood up against a nearby wall, looking a bit shifty-eyed. Soon, a sedan emerged from the courtyard opposite him. He craned his neck to look at it, an excited expression on his face. 1

The screen shimmered, and now Meng Hao stood on top of Mount Daqing. He sighed and tossed a gourd bottle down into the river. 2

Next, he was in the Reliance Sect, holding aloft a medicinal pill, face filled with anxiety as he gave the pill away. 3

When Song Jia saw this, she laughed out loud. The middle-aged woman smiled and shook her head.

The next image was of Meng Hao's shop on the plateau, and his shy, bashful smile as he sold medicinal pills at exorbitant rates 4 There were many images from that time, but they suddenly flashed by quickly, making it difficult to make everything out quickly. The middle-aged woman frowned, seemingly lost in thought.

The next image that Song Jia saw was that of Eccentric Song on the mountaintop and Meng Hao running along with the iron spear. She saw Meng Hao in the city of Cultivators and the deal he made with Lu and Song for the spear. After that were all the bloody events that resulted.

Song Jia couldn't stop laughing. "This Meng Hao is awful... he's nothing like a scholar!" She continued to watch, her laughter causing her eyes to look like two crescent moons.

The images again became somewhat blurry. By this time, he was in the Southern Domain. However, in this instant, the jade slip suddenly began to crumble into pieces. In the blink of an eye, it was covered with cracks. A woman's cold snort could be heard from very far off in the distance. It filled, not only the room, but the entire Song Clan.

The middle-aged woman's face filled with shock, and she coughed up a mouthful of blood. She grabbed the astonished Song Jia and staggered backward several paces, a look of disbelief covering her face.

All of the mountains within the Song Clan began to tremble. As they did,

the moon in the sky above the Song Clan suddenly exploded with a blinding light. It was a flash that instantly began to tremble and darken, as if it were being forcefully suppressed by someone.

At this same moment, the seemingly endless mountains of the Song Clan continued to tremble and then... one by one, the mountains suddenly sank down an entire inch, as if they were being pushed down by some incredible force.

That inch seemed to be a warning, some demonstration of power by... someone. This person seemed to be saying that if they wished, they could wipe out the entire Song Clan mountain range.

At the same time, all of the Nascent Soul Cultivators began to tremble and spit up blood. Deep within the Song Clan mountains, near the location of their Dao Reserves, a roaring sound rose up. It didn't disseminate outward, and only certain people could sense it.

In the deepest, most remote location within the Song Clan mountains, was a stone pillar. Atop the pillar was a corpse, or rather, half of a corpse. The bottom half was nowhere to be seen. The corpse's eyes suddenly snapped opened, whereupon the Qi of the peak Dao Seeking stage exploded out. The corpse trembled, as if it couldn't stand up to the immense power which was bearing down upon the Song Clan.

"Respected Senior, calm your anger. The Song Clan of the Southern Domain is at fault...."

"If you know you are at fault, then correct it," came the transmitted voice of a woman. She was clearly irritated. "Your Song Clan has the tradition of marrying daughters, maybe you should marry her off as a servant, even below a concubine."

The corpse hesitated. "Respected senior...."

"Oh? You know, the Song Clan of the Eastern Lands desire this honor but are unable to achieve it. Do you truly dare to refuse me?" As the woman's voice transmitted out, the entire Song Clan mountains suddenly shook, and sank down three more inches.

Without hesitation, the corpse said, "Respected senior, we shall do as you bid!"

The woman's voice faded away. At the same moment, back in the capital city, Song Jia's face was pale white. Next to her, her mother panted, and blood oozed out from her mouth.

"Jia'er, this person cannot be provoked. This person is...." Before she could finish speaking, her body began to shake. It seemed as if Divine Sense were transmitting into her mind. She didn't continue speaking, and eventually, looked at pale-faced Song Jia, a complex expression on her face.

Everything that had just happened in the Song Clan did not go unnoticed by Meng Hao and the everyone else. The ground shaking caused everyone's faces to flicker, especially the Nascent Soul eccentrics.

Eccentric Song's body trembled, and he coughed up a mouthful of blood. His body continued to tremble, and he coughed up a second mouthful of blood, then a third. In the end, he coughed up a total of seven mouthfuls of blood. He staggered, his face pale and filled with astonishment.

He was the only one in the entire Song Clan who coughed up seven mouthfuls of blood.

It was at this moment that the illusory image of a woman appeared in the square, although no one could see it. She stood there, invisible to everyone except for the Song Clan's most powerful Dao Reserve, the peak Dao Seeking corpse. Only he could sense her rippling Qi as she arrived at the Song Clan square.

From the moment she appeared, her eyes were riveted on Meng Hao. They were filled with kindness, tender affection, and love.

After a long moment passed, the situation in the square returned to normal. Everyone was shocked, causing a deathly silence to fill the air. The Nascent Soul Cultivators looked around pale faced.

Eccentric Song's face was deathly white; he was scared nearly witless. He wasn't sure what had just happened, nor did he know that the entirety of

the Song Clan had been shaken just now.

Panting, he wiped the blood from his mouth. Suddenly, his body shook as a voice filled his mind. The voice filled him with veneration; it was none other than the Spirit Severing stage Patriarch of the Song Clan.

It was clearly a transmission of Divine Will from the Spirit Severing Patriarch, who was passing along the orders of the Dao Reserve corpse. All of the Nascent Soul Cultivators of the Song Clan received the same message.

“Meng Hao is not to be provoked!”

Amidst the silence that covered the square, Wang Tengfei’s voice sounded out. “Meng Hao, you don’t have the qualifications to refuse a battle with me today!” He leaped up and began to stride toward Meng Hao, his Cultivation base erupting with power. Power exceeding the early Foundation Establishment stage soared higher and higher. It turned out Wang Tengfei’s Dao Pillars hummed with the energy of the mid Foundation Establishment stage.

Meng Hao’s eyes flickered as he watched Wang Tengfei approach. Wang Tengfei’s right hand lifted up; black tendrils rose up and circulated around his finger. His eyes were calm.

“In the Reliance Sect of the State of Zhao, you stole my belongings and wrested away my position in the Inner Sect. In the Southern Domain, you insulted me. Do you really think you qualify to be the archenemy of Wang Tengfei?” His hair whipped madly around his head and a mysterious black glow began to emanate from his poison finger. You don’t deserve to be Wang Tengfei’s archenemy. You were an insect back then, and you’re still an insect today! Today, you shall be a blood sacrifice to my poison finger!” Wang Tengfei’s words echoed throughout the square.

“Are you finished?” said Meng Hao coolly. He strode forward, lifting his right hand and striking it out. The power of his four perfect Dao Pillars congealed into the palm. Not a strand leaked out. A roaring filled the air as he struck toward Wang Tengfei.

As the boom filled the square, the surrounding Cultivators watched,

completely focused on what was happening. Only Han Bei and Li Shiqi, as well as Chen Fan, looked with strange expressions toward the blustering Wang Tengfei.

Fatty looked extremely nervous. The large man from the Golden Frost Sect was holding him back, otherwise he would have joined Meng Hao to fight.

Amidst the roaring boom, Wang Tengfei tumbled backward, blood spraying from his mouth. The palm blow just now had actually not been a level strike, but a slap. The sound of the slap rang out as some of Wang Tengfei's teeth shattered. He flopped backward, an expression of shock on his face.

“Impossible....”

Meng Hao strode forward after him, striking with his hand again. A boom sounded out, and more blood sprayed from Wang Tengfei's mouth. This time, the slap struck the other side of his face.

“Impossible!” Wang Tengfei's face was pale, and his eyes filled, not with confusion, but frenzied rage. He was no longer shocked or frightened. His humiliation washed away everything. He stared murderously at Meng Hao and then howled.

At the same time, Wang Xifan began to move forward, as did the frowning old Nascent Soul Cultivator from the Wang Clan.

But then, Eccentric Song's eyes flickered. A look of discomfort and even disbelief covered his face as he reached out to prevent both of them from doing anything.

1. In case you forgot about the sedan scenario, it was eluded to in Chapter 45: A Look Back at the Mortal World after Three Years ↩
2. The scene from Mount Daqing was obviously in Chapter 1: Scholar Meng Hao ↩
3. The scene of giving away the medicinal pill was from Chapter 5: This Kid isn't Bad ↩
4. Meng Hao's business schemes were in Chapter 11: Pill Cultivation

Workshop Outlet as well as subsequent chapters ↵

# Chapter 191: Defeat after Defeat!

The Wang Clan Nascent Soul Cultivator turned his head and stared at Eccentric Song. Meng Hao continued to stride toward the retreating Wang Tengfei. He lifted his hand and grabbed Wang Tengfei's index finger.

"So, this is the finger I decimated that time," he said coolly. Wang Tengfei's eyes flashed with hatred, as well as pleasant surprise.

He had developed this poison finger at great cost. He could have regrown a normal finger, but had instead mastered perseverance and endured the pain necessary to grow a poison finger.

In his estimation, it was a metamorphosis. He had reached this conclusion in a flash of enlightenment; he would take his defeat and transform it into brilliant glory.

The pain had caused him no small amount of torment, but he had suffered through it and created a poison finger which was like a personal precious treasure.

Wang Tengfei knew that all people will endure setbacks in their lives. However, to transform a setback into a treasure can make life truly glorious.

Maybe he was right, but sometimes, fate can be cruel. Today... he ran into Meng Hao.

There were some things that Meng Hao didn't do intentionally. Like it or not, though, the three-colored Resurrection Lily not only made him immune to all other poisons, it also made his body hyper-toxic.

When Wang Tengfei saw Meng Hao grab his poison finger, he began to laugh. The laugh contained both hatred and carefree cheer. He could just imagine how Meng Hao, in mere moments, would begin to wither up and then transform into a pool of blood.

However, even as his laughter began to ring out, it screeched to a sudden stop. A look of absolute disbelief appeared on his face. His finger disappeared within Meng Hao's hand, and then after the space of a few



breaths, a popping sound could be heard. A black mist appeared that seemed to be sentient, it trembled, as if it didn't dare to near Meng Hao.

Meng Hao loosened his grip. Wang Tengfei's entire body shook, and blood sprayed from his mouth. He staggered backward, gazing numbly at the space his index finger had once occupied. He suddenly thought back to the scene from seven or eight years ago, when he had been defeated. He had always thought that he was Chosen, and his opponent was a mere insect. His defeat before had been an accident, and now he had reached Foundation Establishment. His opponent was far beneath him.

But today....

"You're right, you and I aren't archenemies," said Meng Hao indifferently. He had a bit of that same old bashfulness in his expression as he looked at pale-faced Wang Tengfei. "That term is too meaningful. It doesn't suit our relationship." He made no attempt to kill Wang Tengfei. It's not that killing him wasn't worth it, but rather, to kill him in this situation would cause too many complications.

The most important point in the whole thing was that Meng Hao always seemed to end up with the things that belonged to Wang Tengfei. It left him with a strange feeling that suddenly made him even less willing to kill him.

Everything surrounding them was quiet. The invisible woman was gazing tenderly toward Meng Hao. A smile appeared on her face, and when she saw Meng Hao dissolve the poison finger, it transformed into a look of love.

Seeing Meng Hao's shy smile, the woman laughed and shook her head. The loving look grew even stronger.

"This kid has always been a player...." the woman said quietly. "He just can't help but make girls like him." She glanced at Han Bei and then Li Shiqi, as if she were sizing them up as potential daughters-in-law.

"The Han Clan bloodline... not up to standard. She won't do. As for this other one... she seems interesting. She's powerful enough, at least."

Smiling shyly, Meng Hao returned to his place beside Chen Fan. Fatty ran over, giving Meng Hao a wink.

His face pale, Wang Tengfei wordlessly returned to his spot next to Wang Xifan. He laughed bitterly, seemingly having lost any will to fight. Wang Xifan said nothing. He looked over at Meng Hao, his eyes radiating killing intent.

Meng Hao looked up, his eyes locking onto Wang Xifan. When their gazes met, Meng Hao thought back to that year when he sat on top of the East Mountain in the Reliance Sect. Today, however, he was not someone who Wang Xifan could kill with a single glance.

“I wonder if I’ll be able to fight against the Core Formation stage after I form my ninth Perfect Dao Pillar!?” He had been wondering this for some while. After seeing the incredible power of his Perfect Dao Pillars, it caused him to feel even more anticipation for the Perfect Core. In addition, he truly wanted to know if he could battle against the Core Formation stage while he was still in Foundation Establishment!

He wasn’t sure. But as of this day, Wang Xifan was someone who Meng Hao decided must be killed.

Seeing the coldness in Meng Hao’s eyes, Wang Xifan’s killing intent grew more intense. He had the feeling that if he didn’t kill Meng Hao soon, he might lose his chance to do so.

“This Meng Hao is progressing too rapidly....” Wang Xifan had to admit he had overlooked Meng Hao.

It was at this time that the sound of bells rang out, filling the capital city. Suddenly, multicolored beams of light filled the sky. The entire Song Clan passed from night into morning.

In the outside world, it was now night. As the change occurred, the spiritual energy within the Song Clan suddenly grew thicker. However, other than the members of the Song Clan, no one was able to absorb it through breathing exercises. Except for... Meng Hao. His eyes glittered. He actually didn’t need to do anything to absorb the spiritual energy; it naturally drifted into his body strand by strand, slowly replenishing his

four Perfect Dao Pillars. In addition to restoring his nearly empty four Dao Pillars, it was causing the outline of his fifth Dao Pillar to appear.

Of course, it wouldn't be possible to completely solidify the fifth Dao Pillar. That couldn't happen in a short amount of time. Perhaps if he stayed in the Song Clan for a long period of time, it would.

The bells rang out, and the moon and sun alternated their positions. As day and night mixed together, a colorful glow appeared in the air. Suddenly, three figures emerged from the glowing light.

As this happened, numerous members of the Song Clan looked up at the multicolored glow with looks of veneration. This in turn caused the Cultivators from the other Sects and Clans to look up as well.

The three figures gradually grew distinct. They seemed to be solidifying out of nothing. One was an old man who wore white robes. His smiling face did not reveal the slightest bit of panic because of the events which had just occurred in the Song Clan.

Next to the old man were two middle-aged men. They were handsome, and had profound Cultivation bases.

The old man said, "I am so grateful that all of you could join the Song Clan in our search for a son-in-law! Please, let's begin!" He laughed heartily, and then waved his right hand. The entire square trembled, and countless banquet tables appeared out of thin air. Simultaneously, time seemed to swirl about them, and suddenly they were no longer in the square or even the Song Clan, but floating somewhere up in the sky.

They were surrounded by clouds, and everything looked celestial in nature. Maidservants appeared, their features indistinct, but their figures graceful. They danced and flew about as they reverently placed alcohol and Spirit Fruits onto the tables.

The sound of wind, flowing waters, and birdcalls filled the air. It all seemed extremely graceful and elegant. Neither Meng Hao nor any of the other Foundation Establishment Cultivators had ever seen anything like this before. Some people looked around, others stared at the maidservants.

The Nascent Soul Cultivators who led the various Sects and Clans broke out in smiles and words of admiration. “Elder Song Tian’s Cultivation base is profound 1. This cosmic time shifting truly is of the highest degree of perfection.”

The old man was none other than Patriarch Song Tian of the Song Clan. According to the rumors, he had long since reached the Spirit Severing stage. However, it was really impossible for anyone to tell for sure, or even ascertain any clues.

Song Tian laughed and then sat down cross-legged, followed by the two middle-aged men who accompanied him.

The Wang Clan Nascent Soul Cultivator flicked his sleeve. Grim faced, he sat down next to Song Tian, glaring at Eccentric Song. Obviously, he was still brooding at the fact that he had been obstructed by Eccentric Song earlier.

Meng Hao sat at one of the banquet tables next to Fatty. Now that Meng Hao was here, Fatty refused to sit with the Golden Frost Sect, instead demanding to sit next to Meng Hao. He chatted energetically about his experiences in the Golden Frost Sect. He seemed exactly the same as he had been back in the Reliance Sect. Occasionally he would pull out a Spirit Stone and crunch it to pieces between his teeth.

Suddenly, Fatty pulled out what was clearly an extraordinary flying sword. It glittered brightly as he began to use it to grind his teeth.

“One of my friends in the Sect gave me this sword to protect myself,” he said. “But when I grind my teeth with it, it doesn’t feel very good. If you want it, it’s yours.” He handed the sword toward Meng Hao.

It just so happened to be covered with Fatty’s saliva....

Meng Hao hesitated. Next to Fatty, Zhou Daya’s eyes went wide. “Little Patriarch,” he said, “that sword is a magical Legacy weapon of the Nineteenth Bloodline....”

“So annoying! A magical weapon is a magical weapon. Ah, never mind. I guess I can’t give this one to you. But I have some other things.” He pulled

out another large magical weapon, whose bright glow instantly attracted quite a bit of attention.

“Do you like this one?” said Fatty, looking pleased. His expression caused Meng Hao to smile.

Chen Fan sighed, looking enviously at Fatty. He knew how important Fatty was to the Golden Frost Sect. He could only shake his head.

Han Bei drifted over in her men’s clothing. She smiled lightly at Fatty.

“Fellow Daoist Li, would you mind scooting aside? I’d really like to sit here.”

Fatty stared at Han Bei and then looked at Meng Hao. Lowering his voice, he said, “Meng Hao, this chick has pretty good skin. Between her and Chu Yuyan, who do you think is better?”

Meng Hao lifted his glass to his lips and took a sip of alcohol, then cleared his throat.

Fatty laughed loudly, then moved over to make room for Han Bei. She sat down, clearly not offended at all by Fatty. She looked at Meng Hao, blinked, and then laughed.

She slid a bit closer to him, and then gently whispered into his ear, “Brother Meng, how exactly are you going to thank me for the matter regarding Xu Qing?”

1. Song Tian’s name in Chinese is 宋天 sòng tiān – Song is a common family name. Tian means “heaven” or “day” ↔

# Chapter 192: Games with Han Bei

“Fellow Daoist Han, what exactly do you mean?” replied Meng Hao, his expression the same as ever. Despite his calm exterior, his heart trembled. He turned to look at Han Bei, and their eyes met. She was clearly watching him closely, feeling him out.

If Meng Hao’s expression changed even the slightest, Han Bei would noticed. That, of course, was why she had moved so close to him.

Han Bei was a schemer, which Meng Hao had come to understand very clearly in the Black Sieve Sect’s Blessed Land. In fact, he hadn’t encountered anyone among his peers who could come close to her in terms of plotting.

“Brother Meng,” she said with a charming smile, “there’s no need to ask questions you already know the answer to. Junior Sister Xu was a member of the Reliance Sect in the State of Zhao, and so were you.” Coupled with her men’s clothing, her sweet tone made her even more alluring.

“Oh?” replied Meng Hao, looking at her with a vague smile.

His expression caused her to start momentarily. Then she frowned, and she suddenly began to feel nervous at heart.

“Brother Meng, it was for your sake that I helped out Junior Sister Xu on multiple occasions. Were it not for my interference, she would have fallen under a lot of suspicion. Thankfully, I have a lot of influence in the Sect, so she wasn’t implicated when you took Ultimate Vexation.” She smiled. “So, how do you plan to repay me?”

Her smile was beautiful, but her eyes flickered with craftiness. Despite her charming appearance, Meng Hao knew the profound depth of her scheming nature, which was impossible to tell from her expression. He would never forget how she had repeatedly called out to her “Xie, dear” that day, only to then exterminate him in an instant. The scene played out in Meng Hao’s mind.

She leaned a bit closer to Meng Hao. From the perspective of anyone

looking at them, it would definitely seem they were on quite intimate terms.

“Fellow Daoist Han,” he said coolly, “aren’t you worried about being seen so close to me? What if the Black Sieve Sect starts to suspect something? I imagine that they’re looking for me right now. After today, they’ll definitely send people after me.” His words seemed casual, but he was in fact attempting to feel her out.

“Brother Meng, you can just directly ask me what you want to know. There’s no need to try to feel me out.” She chuckled, looking at him. She breathed out slowly, and her breath brushed across him, carrying with it the aroma of orchids. Meng Hao frowned and edged away from her a bit.

Seeing him move away, Han Bei smiled thoughtfully. She moved closer to him yet again. A delicate fragrance wafted off of her.

Meng Hao frowned, and edged away even further. Han Bei let out a soft laugh that carried a bit of derision with it.

“The Black Sieve Sect is indeed looking for you. Don’t worry, though. The other Sects don’t have any idea. The search for you is being done in secret. You do need to be careful though....” She smiled and, finally seeming to think she was a bit too close, to Meng Hao, moved a bit further away. Suddenly, Meng Hao’s hand snaked out and wrapped around her supple waist. He pulled her close to him.

“How exactly did you want me to thank you?” he said. “You tell me.” He was so close to her that she could feel him breathing. They looked into each other’s eyes, and though their expressions both seemed warm, they were clearly locked in a combat of scheming.

Han Bei suddenly looked a bit flustered. She had never anticipated that Meng Hao would do something like this. She recovered her composure quickly, however, and then her eyes shined with an unruly beauty.

“It’s simple,” she said gently. “Give me the jade page you took from within the square cauldron. I want the entire thing. That’s all.” Her body suddenly twisted imperceptibly, and she pulled away from Meng Hao and stood up.

“Brother Meng, think about it carefully,” she said with a smile.

Meng Hao looked back at her with a vague smile. He didn't say anything, but after a moment lifted his hand to his bag of holding to produce a jade slip. He tossed it toward her.

She frowned. This was just an ordinary jade slip, not the jade page that she wanted. However, she also knew that Meng Hao was deeply skilled in scheming, and wasn't someone she could easily trifle with. She accepted the jade slip, scanning it with Spiritual Sense. A strange expression flickered across her face before it returned to normal. She gave Meng Hao a deep look, and then a wide smile once again appeared on her face. She nodded, then turned and headed back toward where the Black Sieve Sect was seated.

Meng Hao lifted his glass and took a sip of alcohol. The only thing on the jade slip was an image of her killing Xie Jie, which Meng Hao had secretly recorded that day.

Actually, even if Han Bei hadn't come looking for him, he would have thought of a way to get in touch with her. He had prepared the jade slip as a way to get information, and also as a bit of insurance.

Fatty watched Han Bei leave, then started peppering Meng Hao with questions. Chen Fan looked at Meng Hao admiringly. He suddenly realized that considering his Junior Brothers skills, there was no need to attempt to arrange a marriage for him.

Some time passed. After a while, the sound of bells rang out, and the multicolored glow appeared once again. From within its midst emerged two people, one a man, the other a woman. The man was handsome, tall and slender, with eyes like lightning. He wore a white robe and had long black hair that gave him a sort of demonic beauty. He smiled toward everyone and raised clasped hands in greeting.

“It's the Song Clan Dao Child, Song Yunshu!!” 1

“Song Yunshu has an extraordinary Cultivation base. As the Dao Child of the Song Clan, he is the number one figure amongst their Foundation Establishment experts....”



“The girl next to him is Song Jia. She’s the girl the Song Clan is finding a husband for.”

Meng Hao looked up, his gaze sweeping across the man and woman as they walked out from the multicolored glow. Song Jia was petite and delicate. She had long hair and clear, fair skin. She exuded a gentle femininity, and had beautiful, bright eyes. Her eyes shone, not with the scheming of Han Bei, the admonishment of Li Shiqi, or the coldness of Xu Qing. Her eyes shone with gentleness.

Anyone who looked at Song Jia would be able to sense her purity and gentleness. She seemed like the type of girl who would never lose her temper.

She looked out at the crowd. The instant Meng Hao looked in her direction, their gazes locked for a moment.

Song Tian, who sat in the very front, laughed and called out, “The hour has arrived! From generation to generation, the Song Clan has practiced Cultivation without excessive formalities. We prefer simplicity. Heroes and talented individuals of the various Sects and Clans, welcome to the Song Clan. With the exception of those here to observe, all of you are here for the same reason. I won’t waste time with further explanations.” Even as his voice echoed out, he waved his right hand, and the clouds up ahead began to churn. In the blink of an eye, a massive vortex appeared, beyond which a strange world could be seen.

Within this world was a vast sea, in the middle of which was an enormous tree that rose up into the sky. The colossal tree was taller than even a mountain.

Thick vines wrapped around its trunk, snaking up with it toward the heavens.

The trunk was enormously large. At its top, limbs stretched out to form a shape almost like a mushroom. Vines hung down, some of them even reaching down into the sea. A wild wind whipped across the waters, giving rise to seething waves.

Up above in the sky, black clouds billowed, and lightning crashed. The

sound of thunder echoed out.

The banquet of Cultivators was actually located in the clouds above this world.

With a laugh, Song Tian said, "At the top of this tree is the Cubic Pearl. Whoever is the first to acquire the pearl, will be the newest son-in-law of this generation of the Song Clan!" He looked out across the crowd, and then at Song Jia. His eyes glowed with the love of an elder for a junior. Then, his gaze fell upon Meng Hao. Just as quickly, he looked away.

Eccentric Song hadn't spoken during this entire time. It was impossible to tell what he was thinking.

Han Bei didn't move, but the Black Sieve Sect disciples who surrounded her seemed itching to go. They had come to the Song Clan for the sole purpose of winning a place as a son-in-law of the Song Clan. Success would mean instant benefit, not for the Sect, but for themselves.

It was hard to say who was first. Multiple figures leaped up and flew toward the cloud vortex and the sea below.

Li Daoyi didn't make a move. As a Dao Child, he had come only to observe. He obviously couldn't marry into the Song Clan. The rest of the Li Clansmen around him, though, were different. One by one, they flew toward the vortex.

Wang Tengfei sat there thoughtfully, hesitating. Wang Xifan held out a hand to bar his way. However, he had long since made his decision. He strode forward and then transformed into a colorful beam that shot toward the vortex.

His participation was different from that of the others. Looks of astonishment appeared on the faces of the Violet Fate Sect disciples, especially their Nascent Soul Cultivator. His eyes flickered. Next to him, the Wang Clan Nascent Soul Cultivator frowned.

Fatty gave a dry cough and looked at Meng Hao. Then, he flew up into the air. His Cultivation base wasn't at the Foundation Establishment stage yet, but he had a host of magical items. The rest of the Golden Frost Sect

Cultivators flew up with him. Together, they charged toward the vortex.

As for Chen Fan and the others from the Solitary Sword Sect, they flew up one after another. So did the disciples of the Blood Demon Sect, including Wang Youcai. Li Shiqi sat there, her expression cool.

Meng Hao looked through the cloud vortex at the sprawling sea and the massive tree. His eyes narrowed, and he sat there thoughtfully for a moment. Then he stood, strode forward, and shot toward the vortex.

The invisible woman was still there. She watched Meng Hao disappearing into vortex. The tender love in her eyes grew stronger. Finally, she sighed.

“You must walk your path alone. Perhaps one day, you will find your way to us, and then you’ll understand everything.... If you can’t make it, then mother will wait for you to be reincarnated in the yellow springs of the underworld.” Her voice was soft as she looked at Meng Hao. She closed her eyes, turned, and then disappeared. It was as if she had never been there to begin with.

Monstrous waves rolled across the surface of the sea, propelled by the screaming wind. It threatened to blow away all of the approaching Cultivators, making it incredibly difficult to even reach the gigantic tree.

Compared to the tree, they were like crickets or ants, tiny to the extreme.

Meng Hao looked down at the waters and his eyes narrowed. Beneath the massive waves, dark shadows could be seen swimming to and fro. A sense of danger welled up within him.

“The Song Clan’s search for a son-in-law is a trial by fire,” said the Song Clan Patriarch. “We don’t want a bloody spectacle. If anyone feels the danger has become too extreme, you can forfeit with a single word and be instantly teleported out.” His words echoed out across the sea. At the sound of his words the wind suddenly lessened, as if it didn’t dare to interfere.

1. Song Yunshu’s name in Chinese is 宋云书 sòng yún shū – Song, of course, is a family name. Yun means “cloud.” Shu means “book” ↔

# Chapter 193: The Flowers Blossoms at Daybreak!

Above the sea and the enormous tree, was the endlessly roiling cloud vortex. Above the cloud vortex was the banquet set by the Song Clan in search of a son-in-law.

Currently the Song Clan Patriarch's voice was ringing out across the sea, and the invisible woman had vanished. Deep within the recesses of the Song Clan mountains was where their Dao Reserves were located.

The corpse, composed of half a body, emitted a mysterious glow from its eyes. Hesitation flickered within the glow.

"Just... just who was she? She seems to have the spirit of an Immortal, but yet is not qualified to be one.... She was looking toward that young man Meng Hao with deep love and affection. However, the object of her gaze was not Meng Hao, but... that Resurrection Lily inside of him!

"She said that he would come before them, and would understand everything. Why did those simple words cause my hair to stand on end...." The old man's eyes emanated an archaic light, and he sank into thoughtfulness. "She said that if he failed, she would wait for him to be reincarnated in the yellow springs of the underworld. How very logical. It seems she's accustomed to such things.... This is not something a Cultivator can do. There is no reincarnation in Cultivation. For a Cultivator to attempt to reincarnate is useless. Otherwise, why would the Rebirth Cave have appeared?

"Rebirth is possible, which means the ability to live another life. However, there is no such thing as reincarnation. In terms of reincarnation, this is only possible for... the legendary Resurrection Lily! The Resurrection Lily merges with a person as a form of reincarnation. This is why it's called a Resurrection Lily! Once the flower merges with a person, the person disappears, but the flower remains. However, things are never so absolute in this world. If the Resurrection Lily were to be tamed and consumed, Seven Colored Immortal Ascension is possible!"

This Song Clan Patriarch who had just recently revealed himself to the rest of the Song Clan suddenly flew up into the air. His eyes glittered as the indistinct image of the lower half of his body appeared. His hair whipped around his head as he kneeled atop the pillar.

“Immortal, your origin is full of mystery. The Song Clan has watched over the Southern Domain for generation after generation. Immortal, I beg you to clear up my confusion!” He bit down on his tongue and spit up some blood from his heart. The blood flew out and instantly disappeared. However, the Sun-Moon treasure in the sky above the Song Clan suddenly flickered, and a glow appeared that no outsider would be able to notice. It shot down through the mountains until it was directly in front of the old man.

It transformed into a partially transparent figure. It was impossible to tell whether it was male or female. It was blurry as if it were both there, and not there....

When the old corpse caught sight of the figure, an expression of veneration appeared on his face. He knew that this was the Spirit of the Clan treasure. This Spirit... was also an ancient Patriarch of the Song Clan. According to legend, after achieving Immortality, he had left behind a fragment of his Spirit here.

The figure lifted its hand and gently tapped the top of the old man's head.

The man's body trembled, and suddenly his eyes shone with disbelief. He looked up and watched as the illusory figure slowly disappeared. It was as if it had never been there.

The old corpse took a deep breath. “The flower blooms at dawn, and achieves Immortality on the day of vicissitude. The mother of the Resurrection Lily... Immortal Li... 1 This Meng Hao is too dangerous....” He was silent in thought for a moment. However, he gave no orders, nor did he do anything to reverse the words he had been forced to transmit earlier by the woman.

Meanwhile, in the roaring ocean beneath the cloud vortex, the wind

screamed. The Cultivators who had entered this place numbered in the dozens. They circled the region of the enormous tree.

Whoever could break through the massive winds and actually reach the tree itself, would snatch the first place position in the race.

To be able to earn a place within the Song Clan would earn the right to practice Cultivation within the profound Clan regions. Almost all of the Cultivators present thirsted for such an opportunity. That was why they were here, and that was what they were fighting for.

Meng Hao, on the other hand, was not here for any supposed chance to marry into the Song Clan. Although this place was incredibly suitable for Cultivation, he wasn't the type to be inclined to depend on others. Unless he had an important purpose, he preferred to be like the sea and the sky, free to roam as he wished, alone.

For a man to roam under the heavens, enjoy the scenery, observe the beauty of the earth and the animals... that was what life meant to Meng Hao. His eyes glittered as he looked up at the massive tree in the distance. At its vast top existed a pearl.

The others didn't value the pearl itself, but rather, what it represented. Only Meng Hao cared about the former! Were it not for the pearl, Meng Hao wouldn't even be here.

"I hope that pearl can dispel my poison. If it can, I won't have to go through all the trouble of infiltrating the Violet Fate Sect."

Meng Hao's eyes flickered, and his heart trembled as he shot forward. He narrowed his eyes and stopped flying for a moment.

"So, I can absorb spiritual energy in this place too. Furthermore, it's even more dense here than outside. What big secret does the Song Clan have? How come the spiritual energy here is like that in the Blood Immortal Legacy zone? Why can I absorb it?" His eyes filled with thought, he once again shot forward at high speed. At the same time, he circulated his Cultivation base. His four Perfect Dao Pillars hummed, and his body became like a black hole. Immediately, the spiritual energy in the area began to rush toward him.

Meng Hao didn't suck it in with unbridled speed, but cautiously, gradually.

Off in the distance, Wang Tengfei's face was grim, his heart filled with bitterness and even a bit of insanity. Ever since he was young, he had been Chosen. Because of the blood of the Flying Rain Dragon which had fallen from the heavens, his path had been set as he grew up. It seemed he always had the same type of luck.

However... thanks to his brother Wang Lihai, he hadn't been able to become a Dao Child of the Wang Clan. All the focus gradually drifted further and further away from him. In fact, for his entire childhood, he had lived within the shadow of his brother.

He wanted to resist, to fight back. He wanted to exceed his brother. He wanted to prove that he was worthy to be Dao Child of the Wang Clan. Because of that, he had left the Clan and gone to the State of Zhao in search of the Flawless Foundation.

He knew that if he stayed in the Wang Clan, it would be difficult to rise to prominence.

Filled with idealism and aspiration, he went to the State of Zhao to find the Flawless Foundation and the legacy of the Flying Rain-Dragon. His plan was to return from the State of Zhao and then challenge his brother to battle.

However, everything had been ruined by Meng Hao. He had been defeated. Utterly and thoroughly. But he refused to give up. Thanks to Wang Xifan's encouragement, and the support of Chu Yuyan, he had emerged from the shadows with his poison finger.

In fact, it was only with the help of Chu Yuyan that he had achieved the Cracked Foundation that he had. When he had witnessed his brother die in the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament, it had suddenly felt as if the future were wide open. His extreme misfortune would finally give birth to a meteoric rise.

At that time, he believed that Wang Tengfei's life would finally be restored.

Except... subsequent events caught him completely unawares. To his astonishment, he found that Wang Lihai was not dead. The Wang Lihai that died in the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament was in fact a Dao Clone created by a Wang Clan patriarch.

Subsequently, the rumours of Chu Yuyan and the strange man spread like wildfire. It was something he simply could not tolerate. Yet even more unbelievable was how when he asked Chu Yuyan about it, she wouldn't respond.

It would be bad enough if that were all that he suffered. He could grit his teeth and endure. However, it was here in the Song Clan that he discovered the man who had been seen with Chu Yuyan was actually Meng Hao!

That had driven him crazy. He had gone all out in order to kill Meng Hao. However, that battle became the straw that broke the camel's back. That straw, that crushing defeat at the hands of Meng Hao, caused Wang Tengfei to laugh bitterly. His thinking, his temperament, his everything, all twisted and changed in that moment.

It pushed him toward the edge of insanity.

"I can do without the Wang Clan," he thought, his eyes filled with veins of blood, "and I can also cut off Chu Yuyan. I, Wang Tengfei, will tread my own path. I will take everything away from Meng Hao. I will snatch it all back!!" His body trembled with crazed fervor as he shot through the wind toward the tree.

Fatty plugged his nose against the wind as he floated in mid-air. Seven or eight Golden Frost Sect disciples formed a protective ring around him.

"The Sect Lord prohibited me from marrying into the Song Clan. But, I figured I would give it a shot anyway," he said. He popped a Spirit Stone into his mouth and crunched it to pieces.

The surrounding Golden Frost Sect disciples could only smile bitterly.

"Little Patriarch, you really shouldn't be doing this. Sir, what if you go berserk and then somehow become a son-in-law of the Song Clan? When



we returned to the Sect, our punishment would be horrific....”

“That’s right, Little Patriarch, think things over again... Think things over again....”

Fatty stared at them with wide-eyed, his expression one of disbelief. “But I’m already here,” he said.

“Little Patriarch,” said Zhou Daya hurriedly, “don’t you know about all those Junior Sisters back in the Sect who have eyes for you? Plus, you have several official beloved assigned to you by the Sect Leader. They’re all waiting for you....” He understood Fatty the most, and as soon as the words were out of his mouth, Fatty took a deep breath.

“Alright, forget it. Let’s just go along to watch the fun.”

At the same time as the Golden Frost Sect disciples were trying to dissuade Fatty from participating, off in the distance, Wang Youcai floated in mid-air looking thoughtful. A strange Qi circulated around his body. He appeared to be around seventeen or eighteen years old, but also emanated an extremely anti-social air. He gazed toward the enormous tree, lost in thought.

He looked at Fatty, and then Meng Hao. Whenever Meng Hao looked back at him, however, he would avert his eyes.

Whatever had happened between him and Dong Hu, it seemed would remain a secret that only the two of them could understand. 2

The mournful, screaming wind whipped the sea into madness. The dark shadows which swam back and forth in its depths made this whole place seem incredibly awe-inspiring. Amidst the howling wind, everyone surged forward. The wind blasted against their faces as they shot toward the enormous tree.

1. Immortal Li was mentioned before in multiple previous chapters: Chapter 83: Patriarch, What About Disciple’s Poison...?, Chapter 88: Lord Revelation’s True Self, Chapter 94: You Really Want Me To Come Out?, Chapter 95: A Rain Shower, a Cold Spell, and Chapter 117: A Tiny Little Punishment ↩

2. The relationship between Dong Hu and Wang Youcai is mentioned most recently in Chapter 71: Dong Hu and Chapter 72: A True Man ↵

# Chapter 194: Will of the World Tree [1]

It was impossible to fly very high in this place, because the wind speed increased with altitude. Meng Hao saw one Black Sieve Sect disciple who tried to fly up directly toward the top of the tree. Before he got too high, he screamed, and his body disappeared into a haze of blood and flesh.

The wind continued to pick up. It seemed as if it were filled with sharp blades, as well as a hard-to-describe pressure that made the three thousand meter area around the tree seem like a wall.

When Meng Hao entered the area, he felt the intense pressure pushing against him. The closer he got to the tree, the thicker the spiritual energy got. Of course, he could absorb it, and the closer he got, the more quickly he did so. His eyes shone brightly.

“Moving forward must be very difficult for everyone else, but for me, this place is like a holy land of Cultivation!” He looked up at the enormous tree in front of him, which stretched thousands of meters up into the sky. “Just exactly... what kind of tree is this?” He could sense that the spiritual energy in the place was not the spiritual energy of Heaven and Earth, but rather, produced by the gigantic tree.

As all the Cultivators struggled their way toward the tree, up above the clouds in the sky, the members of the five Sects and three Clans watched on through the cloud vortex, eyes glittering.

They could see everything quite clearly.

Song Tian smiled. “Of all the heroes and Chosen of the various Sects and Clans that have come today, I wonder who will be the first to reach the tree?” The Nascent Soul eccentrics from the Sects and Clans all smiled.

“I’m afraid it’s difficult to say. I never imagined that that Song Clan’s search for a son-in-law would involve this treasured painting....”

“This tree must have been summoned by a will shard from the ancient World Tree. It was clearly painted by the ancient Daoist Grandmaster Shui Dongliu 2 when he gained enlightenment at the legendary location in

which the World Tree destroyed itself. It is said that with sufficient enlightenment, the tree itself can be summoned. This is truly a precious treasure capable of summoning that which is ancient.”

Han Bei sat off to the side, observing the Nascent Soul Cultivators and their discussion. She looked for a moment at Meng Hao in the cloud vortex. Her face was calm, giving not even the slightest clue as to what she was thinking.

Li Shiqi stared at the tree created by the will shard of the World Tree, lost in thought.

The Nascent Soul Cultivator from the Black Sieve Sect was a middle-aged man. “The World Tree’s will shard is capable of releasing the legendary ancient Heaven-replacing spiritual energy,” he said. “Unfortunately, it is useless to Cultivators, and will only be an obstacle to them. However, with a suitable Cultivation base, and sufficient enlightenment, the World Tree could be placed in that world. What a truly precious treasure! Eventually, it could be possible for this treasure to help these disciples make a breakthrough in their Cultivation base.” As he gazed at the cloud vortex, his gaze lingered on Meng Hao.

He had noticed Meng Hao some time ago, of course, but had maintained his silence and done nothing.

“This tree is indeed a will shard of the World Tree. The painting is entitled Ancient Will of the World Tree. It was gifted to me by the Eighth Sea Lord of the Milky Way Sea when I was one thousand years old. I brought it out today for the purpose of helping these members of the younger generation gain enlightenment of ancient times, as well as to benefit all of you. This painting will not belong to me much longer.” Song Tian laughed, shaking his head. “I intend to give this painting as a gift to whoever is the next son-in-law of this generation of the Song Clan.”

This caused the other Nascent Soul Cultivators to stare wordlessly at the cloud vortex, their eyes shining brightly.

Suddenly, Eccentric Song, who sat several places down, laughed and said, “Patriarch, would it be appropriate for me to have a little wager with these

Fellow Daoists in regards to who will reach the tree first?”

Elder Fan from the Solitary Sword Sect laughed heartily. He took a swig of alcohol and jeeringly said, “All of us will naturally bet on our own Sect’s disciples. Elder Song, who will you bet on?”

“I bet on HIM!” said Eccentric Song, lifting his arm and pointing toward the cloud vortex at...

Meng Hao!

All of the Nascent Soul Cultivators followed the line created by Eccentric Song’s fingers to look at Meng Hao. The eyes of the Nascent Soul Cultivator from the Black Sieve Sect sparkled.

The Wang Clan Nascent Soul Cultivator frowned.

Elder Fan from the Solitary Sword Sect laughed and gave Eccentric Song a meaningful look.

“Excellent, what are the stakes?” said the Nascent Soul Cultivator from the Blood Demon Sect, a withered old woman with a full head of silver hair. Her voice was raspy, like bones rubbing together. She smiled hypocritically.

“I put up this Soul Fruit!” he said. He flicked his sleeve and pressed his fingers down onto the space between his eyebrows. After the space of a few breaths, the illusory image of a small, cross-legged figure emerged.

In the blink of an eye, the small figure coalesced into an object that looked like a Spirit Fruit. It emitted a delicate fragrance.

This was none other than a Soul Fruit, something that Nascent Soul Cultivators could congeal into being from their Nascent Soul, and could compare to heavenly materials and earthly treasures. Heaven and earth could produce Spirit Fruits, but to Nascent Soul Cultivators, their bodies were their own Heaven and Earth, and could naturally produce such fruits.

Soul Fruits are like luck from Heaven and Earth, and are the most precious treasures of Nascent Soul Cultivators.

Soul Fruits from others have replenishing powers, and to Nascent Soul

Cultivators, are the most optimal source of healing and restoration.

Hearing Eccentric Song's words caused thoughtful expressions to appear on the faces of the other Nascent Soul Cultivators. Not much time passed before all of them coalesced Soul Fruits of their own. Soon, eight of them hovered together in mid-air.

Eight Soul Fruits. To any Nascent Soul Cultivator, such stakes would be incredibly tempting. All of the Cultivators pretended not to be moved, but inwardly, they shook with excitement. They gazed through the cloud vortex at the various disciples.

Song Tian smiled and did nothing to prevent the proceedings. Of the two men sitting next to him, one was meditating with eyes closed, the other was closely watching the Cultivators in the cloud vortex, his face grim.

The Song Clan Dao Child, Song Yunshu sat calmly near Patriarch Song Tian. He said nothing, just smiled. Within his eyes flickered an intense light.

Eccentric Song seemed enlivened. His eyes shone as he gazed at Meng Hao in the cloud vortex.

"Alright, boy," he thought, "I want to see the same skills you used that day in the State of Zhao. If you win, I'll gift you with one of these Soul Fruits as a reward." Because of what had happened in the State of Zhao, as well as various rumors he had heard in the Song Clan, Eccentric Song keenly anticipated Meng Hao's performance.

As the people above placed their bets, the dozens of Cultivators down by the enormous tree continued to forge ahead. Because of the pressure pushing against them, they couldn't move very quickly. But they continued forward nonetheless.

At the moment, the fastest of the group was Wang Tengfei. His eyes were red, and he moved forward recklessly. To him this was his only chance. If he joined the Song Clan, then he could start everything anew, and begin a new rise to prominence.

"Chu Yuyan, you slut. And you, Meng Hao! Just wait for me!" He ground

his teeth as he pushed forward a few dozen meters.

After Wang Tengfei was Wang Youcai, who approached quietly. Behind him was a group of Cultivators including Chen Fan, who had taken the lead among them.

Fatty, with his entourage of protectors, moved along neither quickly nor slowly.

Meng Hao was obviously a bit behind. However, his expression was calm as he proceeded forward. Every so often, he would pause and cautiously suck in a bit of the thick spiritual energy around him.

Soon, an hour had passed. Wang Tengfei was only about thirty meters from the tree. Wang Youcai was roughly sixty meters away. Everyone else was about three hundred meters or closer. Up above in the clouds, Eccentric Song was getting nervous. Around him, the other Nascent Soul Cultivators began to smile.

Three hundred meters away, Meng Hao took a deep breath. He had been carefully absorbing spiritual energy the entire way. The effect was the same as consuming a handful of Sieve Earth Pills. Despite his caution, he was able to absorb more and more spiritual energy. Meng Hao's eyes suddenly glittered.

"This is a rare opportunity," he thought. "I might as well absorb all of it!" Determination filling his eyes he began to move forward. In that instant, a tremor ran through his body as he ceased to repress his four Perfect Dao Pillars. They began to rotate, and a buzzing sound echoed out within him. A massive vortex appeared around him.

The vortex instantly caused the surrounding spiritual energy to shoot toward him.

The water beneath him was whipped into a fury, and Meng Hao's very body seemed to distort and grow blurry. Mysterious spiritual energy screamed into him, and his speed suddenly increased dramatically.

It wasn't that he was aiming to increase his speed. However, as he moved forward, the spiritual energy grew more and more abundant. In the

blink of an eye, he was not three hundred meters away from the tree, but two hundred fifty, then two hundred....

Meng Hao's Cultivation base was gradually increasing. The outline of his fifth Dao Pillar was now completely visible and rapidly congealing.

Meng Hao started to get excited. He took a deep breath and moved forward even faster. Considering he had decided to recklessly absorb the spiritual energy, there was no reason not to absorb all of it.

This was Meng Hao's personality. Even when he was a scholar, he had been like this. It was simply how he lived. Normally, he didn't like to cause a scene. But sometimes causing a scene was unavoidable. When it happened, he would go all out.

His fifth Dao Pillar coalesced and his Cultivation base continued to climb. His eyes began to glow brightly, and his Qi grew more and more powerful!

In the space of a few breaths, he had rocketed forward until he was only ninety meters from the tree. His sudden blazing speed was too incredible, as was his absorption of the spiritual energy. The surrounding Cultivators noticed immediately.

They saw the fear-inspiring vortex which surrounded him, and could sense him absorbing the thick spiritual energy which had been blocking them. It shot toward him at incredible speed, sending ripples throughout the entire world.

"What's he doing....?"

"He's... he's absorbing the spiritual energy? That's impossible!"

"How... how can he be doing that?"

The surrounding Cultivators looked at him with shock.

It wasn't just them. Up in the clouds, all of the onlookers were watching the scene, their hearts filled with astonishment.

"He's swallowing up the ancient spiritual energy!"

"What is he? What kind of Cultivation technique does he use to be able



to do that!”

The eyes of the Nascent Soul Cultivators glittered like lightning as they watched Meng Hao. They were shocked to the core, never having imagined that they would see something like this.

Interestingly, even though they were Nascent Soul Cultivators who should easily be able to see a person’s Cultivation base, Meng Hao’s Dao Pillars were currently obscured from their vision.

It was as if some bizarre force were interfering, making it impossible for them to pick up even the slightest clue. The middle-aged man from the Black Sieve Sect watched thoughtfully, his eyes narrowed. He had noticed this strange obscuration of Meng Hao’s Dao Pillars even before he entered the cloud vortex.

As the alarmed Nascent Soul Cultivators watched Meng Hao’s advancement, the Song Clan Patriarch Song Tian looked at him, his eyes glowing brightly. In fact, his eyes hadn’t left Meng Hao from the beginning.

He stared wordlessly at Meng Hao in the cloud vortex, eyes flickering with surprise.

Eccentric Song laughed loudly. He also found the scene to be unbelievable, but on the other hand was incredibly happy. As his laughter rang out, Han Bei sucked in a deep breath, thinking about how Meng Hao had been able to enter the square cauldron even though the name Meng did not exist in the Nine Great Families.

Li Shiqi’s phoenix-like eyes flashed as she watched Meng Hao thoughtfully.

Down by the enormous tree, the spiritual energy roiled, causing the wild wind to grow in intensity. The wind buffeted Wang Tengfei, causing him to spin backward from thirty meters to about one hundred and twenty-five meters!

The others were blown back as well. With this reversal, Meng Hao was now the closest person to the tree, being only ninety meters away.

Wang Tengfei raised his head up and howled. He couldn't accept such a situation. He pushed forward with all his strength. However, at that same time, Meng Hao took a deep breath and also pushed forward. He moved forward about thirty meters, and then another thirty!

In two short bursts, he was now only thirty meters away from the tree. Compared to the tree, he was like a cricket. The vortex around him swirled, causing the boundless spiritual energy in the area to suck toward him. The full shape of his fifth Dao Pillar was now visible. If he continued at this rate, he would most likely be able to complete it.

When he formed his fifth Perfect Dao Pillar, Meng Hao would definitely be... the most powerful person in the Foundation Establishment stage.

Whether it be Chosen or Dao Children, the entire Foundation Establishment stage would be like dry weeds that could be crushed beneath his feet!

1. The World Tree was mentioned in a few previous chapters, including Chapter 109: The Legend of Doom, Chapter 158: Coexist with Ji?!, and Chapter 160: No Meng in the Nine Families ↩
2. Shui Dongliu's name in Chinese is 水东流 shuǐ dōng liú – This is a somewhat odd name. Shui is a Chinese surname, which also means “water.” Dong means “east.” Liu means “flow.” So literally his name means “water flows east” ↩

# Chapter 195: Suppressing Everyone

The chance Meng Hao had now was sudden and unexpected. Thanks to this lucky break, his Cultivation base was climbing upward at incredible speed. Furthermore, the closer he got to the tree, the thicker the spiritual energy became.

He took a deep breath, completely ignoring the strange looks everyone was giving him. He was completely focused on the enormous tree and the bizarre spiritual energy it emitted that only he could absorb.

It had been a long time since he had been able to enjoy the refreshing feeling of absorbing spiritual energy. His eyes glistened brightly as his body flashed onward.

The spiritual energy beneath the tree roiled madly. His body was like a whirling black hole, sucking all the spiritual energy in, without exception.

His Cultivation base continued to climb, and the image of his fifth Dao Pillar grew clearer. Soon it would no longer be illusory.

Ten percent, twenty percent, thirty percent....

Meng Hao grew more and more excited as he absorbed the increasingly thick spiritual energy. He leaped forward, heading directly toward the base of the enormous tree.

Next to the towering tree, Meng Hao was little more than an insect, tiny and weak. It was essentially impossible to even compare. They were as different as a firefly and the shining moon.

Meng Hao was the first to step into the tree itself. The other Cultivators closed in. Within the space of about ten breaths, Wang Tengfei and Wang Youcai also stepped onto it.

They, of course, could not absorb the spiritual energy of this place, and therefore had no way to replenish themselves. There is no need to even mention how difficult it was for them to proceed forward. On the other hand, Meng Hao was like a fish in water. In an instant, he was already three hundred meters away from them.

After observing this, the eyes of the spectators shone with a strange glow. This was especially true of the Song Clan Patriarch. His eyes glittered brightly as he watched the cloud vortex, and Meng Hao.

“So he can absorb the spiritual energy there....” he thought. “But that place is merely a painting of the World Tree. It couldn’t even be considered a projected image. However, it does contain some of the World Tree’s will, as well as dense spiritual energy, although not much....” His eyes glittered, although they contained some amount of hesitation.

Eccentric Song too felt shocked, but was also about to go wild with joy. A wide smile emerged on his face. He looked at the shifting expressions of the other Nascent Soul Cultivators and smiled even wider. He flicked his sleeve to collect the Soul Fruits together.

“Fellow Daoists, I shall collect my winnings. Do you wish to make another wager? I bet this kid will become the next son-in-law of the Song Clan. What do you say? Wager, or no wager?”

The other Nascent Soul Cultivators ignored him, refusing to be provoked, and instead focused on what was happening in the cloud vortex. They gazed thoughtfully as Meng Hao ascended the gigantic tree.

Eccentric Song continued to prod a few more times, but seeing that the others refused to speak, he simply put away the Soul Fruits and laughed. The ill feelings toward Meng Hao from years ago were now completely gone.

“This Meng Hao kid isn’t bad,” said Eccentric Song, eyeing the cloud vortex. “Ai, if I had known he was like this, I would have bet on him against Wu Dingqiu all those years ago.”

Within the cloud vortex, Wang Tengfei’s eyes were red. He was on the tree now, proceeding up. The spiritual energy in the area pushed against him, and he had no way to absorb it whatsoever. The wind whipped about, but he forged on without regard to caution. He knew that if he were knocked off the tree, then he would have to start over from the very bottom.

Making progress was incredibly difficult, but every time he looked up

and saw Meng Hao speeding along, it would cause him to ignore the screaming wind and intense pressure. Insanity and intense jealousy filled his heart, and he would proceed onward through the thick pressure.

“How could I possibly lose to him!?!?” he raged inwardly. “I am a Wang Clan Chosen! He stole my legacy and my beloved! Today, I shall wrest away his luck. Why are you always so unfair to Wang Tengfei, Heavens?! I refuse! I will not give in!!” Setting his teeth, he shot upward. The wild wind buffeted him, but he held doggedly onto the tree. It felt as if his arms were about to rip off.

To his astonishment, Wang Tengfei suddenly realized that the unabsorbable spiritual energy of this place, which exhibited such strong pressure, was actually lessening around Meng Hao. The closer he got to Meng Hao, the easier it was to progress.

Behind him, Wang Youcai, Qian Shuihen, Lu Song as well as Fatty and the others, had all reached the tree, and were relentlessly pursuing.

All of them noticed Meng Hao’s significant increase in speed.

Meng Hao had already sensed that although the spiritual energy in this place seemed thick and abundant, actually, the entire place was divided into different areas. The spiritual energy of the area he was currently in was almost sucked dry. Because of that, Wang Tengfei and the others were able to move more quickly.

However, although the spiritual energy below him was decreasing, he continued moving upward. Soon, he encountered more dense spiritual energy, which he began to absorb immediately. His fifth Dao Pillar was already about forty percent complete.

“The spiritual energy here is organized in layers,” he thought, his eyes shining brilliantly. “Each layer can be completely absorbed into my body. Although it looks incredibly dense, there’s actually not very much of it. However, if I absorb all of it, I should be able to complete my fifth Dao Pillar.” He continued onward, and the spiritual energy continued to pour into him. Whenever it began to grow thin, he would continue on upward to a new layer.

Behind him, Wang Tengfei and the others were continuing to increase their speed. The spiritual energy having dried up, the resisting pressure was gone. The only thing they had to deal with was the raging wind. Their progress now was much easier, so the gap between Meng Hao and them was slowly lessening.

The enormous tree was many dozens of meters in diameter, and from a distance, didn't seem very far away from the cloud layer above, where the Nascent Soul Cultivators watched the proceedings. Seeing what was happening caused them to sit there quietly in contemplation. The Wang Clan Cultivator let out a cold harrumph. "Eccentric Song, let's make another bet. This time, the stakes are two Soul Fruits!"

Eccentric Song hesitated for a moment, his brow furrowed.

The Black Sieve Sect Nascent Soul Cultivator coughed lightly. "I'm in," he said.

The Nascent Soul Cultivator from the Li Clan chimed in. "So, another bet," he said coolly. "Eccentric Song, why don't we all join in? Two Soul Fruits per person. Winner takes all." His words made Eccentric Song even more hesitant.

After a long moment passed, he gritted his teeth. He actually had incredible faith in Meng Hao's ability to perform, so he flicked his sleeve.

"We're on!" he said.

Subsequently, all of the Nascent Soul eccentrics produced Soul Fruits. Seeing so many in one place caused all of the Cultivators to palpitate with eagerness. The stakes of this wager were significantly greater than the previous bet.

At the same time as all the eccentrics made their bets, Meng Hao shot up at top speed. He had passed through three layers of the enormous tree, and had now progressed roughly thirty percent up. By now, Wang Tengfei and the others were a mere thirty meters behind him. It seemed they might soon pass him.

Meng Hao's face was calm. The luck of this place lay in the spiritual

energy; as far as he was concerned, it didn't matter who was in first place. Suddenly, Wang Tengfei roared. Employing some unknown magical technique, his body began to glow, and he shot up with incredible, explosive speed. In the space of a few breaths, he had progressed more than thirty meters. This caused him to pass Meng Hao by nearly ten meters.

However, before he even had a chance to rejoice, an enormous force caused his body to tremble. The pressure caused him to cough up blood as it enveloped his body. Just then, Meng Hao passed him, sucking the spiritual energy of the area into his body. The pressure began to subside. If it hadn't, Wang Tengfei felt as if he might have been crushed down into the tree by a giant, invisible hand.

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever as he proceeded onward, ignoring Wang Tengfei. He passed the area that was covered with the blood Wang Tengfei had coughed up, continuing to absorb the spiritual energy. After absorbing all of it, he moved onto the next layer.

Clearly, anyone who wanted to try to pass Meng Hao could do so by merely charging forward.

However, seeing what happened to Wang Tengfei shook the hearts of all the Cultivators below. They stared at Meng Hao with strange expressions. As for Fatty, he took a deep breath, and looked completely disbelieving.

As of this moment, none of the pursuing Cultivators dared to pass Meng Hao....

Meng Hao continued on slowly, which gave them no other option than to do the same. Looking embarrassed and helpless, they followed Meng Hao. Clearly, many of them had various plans in mind. They would wait until the very top of the tree, whereupon various techniques would explode out as they attempted to pass him!

# Chapter 196: Followed by All Eyes

Meng Hao was aware of all of this, of course. His expression was the same as ever and he ignored everyone else. He paused at each layer to absorb as much spiritual energy as possible, and then continued to climb upward.

Several meters behind him were all the other Cultivators. They eyed Meng Hao helplessly, waiting for him to move onward before doing so themselves.

Each and every pair of eyes inside this world was watching Meng Hao. He was the focus of all attention.

The Song Clan's competition in search of a son-in-law had turned into Meng Hao's stepping stone. Regardless of whether Meng Hao was the winner or not, he had already left a deep impression on Song Jia. That, coupled with the events which had happened before the banquet began, caused her to ignore everyone else and focus solely on Meng Hao.

Perhaps it was fate; after today, the five Clans and three Sects would know that Meng Hao was also Chosen!

Perhaps it was fate; after today, stories of scholar Meng Hao of the State of Zhao would spread throughout the entire Southern Domain. There was now one more amongst the ranks of the Chosen!

Also fated was that previously unknown Meng Hao would be the complete center of attention. More and more Cultivators would hear of him and especially... the matter of him and Chu Yuyan. Rumors would spread like wildfire throughout the entirety of the Southern Domain.

Meng Hao would become the object of jealousy of countless male Cultivators. Of course he would also attract the notice of many female Cultivators. He was now the subject of a huge scandal involving one of the four most beautiful women in the Southern Domain. Everyone was paying attention to him now.

At the same time, anyone who hadn't heard about Meng Hao's dealings



with the Violet Fate Sect back in the State of Zhao, would surely know about it now. Meng Hao's name would only become more and more well known.

In actuality, if people knew about the feud between the Black Sieve Sect and Meng Hao, or how he had taken the Blood Immortal Legacy, then he would instantly become the most famous Cultivator in all of the Southern Domain. After all, he could now sweep across Chosen and push down Dao Children.

Today was only the first sign of what was to come, though. This was Meng Hao cutting into the Southern Domain!

[TL Notes : In case you forgot, this is the title of Book 2]

Time passed. Meng Hao, his expression the same as always, continued onward slowly. Behind him, many of the Cultivators were growing impatient. A young man from the Violet Fate Sect looked at Meng Hao slowly absorbing spiritual energy, and frowned. Unable to accept the situation any longer, he shot forward.

He slapped his bag of holding, and immediately, eight talismans appeared to circle around him. A bright glow appeared, some sort of protective spell. With a triumphant cry, he charged onward, passing Meng Hao and entering the next layer beyond.

The Violet Fate Sect Nascent Soul Cultivator coolly mentioned, "This is a Chosen of the Violet Fate Sect, Liu Gao. His Cultivation base is beyond ordinary. His eight talismans treasure can reduce any force of pressure by eighty percent." Even as the words left his mouth, his face suddenly grew unsightly.

As soon as Liu Gao passed Meng Hao and entered the next area, his body began to shake. His face tightened, and blood sprayed from his mouth. His body trembled as if it were under attack. Everyone watched as he howled and tried to endure. Meng Hao cleared his throat. He stopped in his tracks for a moment, looking up and waiting.

After the space of a few breaths, the Violet Fate Sect disciple coughed up more blood. One by one, his eight talismans disintegrated. With a

miserable scream, he fell down into the sea below. He emerged moments later, pale faced, and began to climb again. It didn't take him long to rejoin the group of people below Meng Hao, where he stared upward with fear and respect.

Everyone looked thoughtfully at Meng Hao, who once again cleared his throat and moved upward, absorbing spiritual energy along the way.

No one dared to attempt to pass him. They could only follow helplessly. Time passed as Meng Hao proceeded through the layers. By now, his fifth Dao Pillar was about seventy percent complete.

The further he progressed, the more spiritual energy he needed. Before long, Meng Hao was roughly three thousand meters from the apex of the enormous tree.

Wang Tengfei's eyes flashed, and though Wang Youcai said nothing, his eyes shined brightly. A look of anticipation covered Fatty's face. He had no thoughts of trying to pass Meng Hao, but was very much looking forward to seeing what happened when Meng Hao reached the top.

It wasn't just the Cultivators whose eyes glittered; up in the cloud layer, the eccentrics from the five Sects and three Clans, as well as all the Song Clan members, were all focused on Meng Hao. Although his participation in the Song Clan search for a son-in-law had been unexpected, a critical moment was approaching. Everyone watched on with keen anticipation.

With a smile, Song Tian said, "At the top of the tree, there is a final test. Of the heroes of the various Sects and Clans, it's hard to say which one... will be able to pass the final test."

One of the Nascent Soul Cultivators laughed and said, "I had heard that part of the tradition of your Song Clan search for a son-in-law involves a difficult test. I'm very curious as to the nature of this test. Elder Song, would you mind explaining a bit about it?"

"That's right," said the Golden Frost Sect's Nascent Soul Cultivator. "I've also heard such things. Elder Song, would you mind telling us some about it? We're all very curious."

Everyone seemed very interested in hearing about the final test.

Song Clan Patriarch Song Tian laughed loudly. Then, he looked at the middle-aged man who sat at his right hand. “Muqiu, we are searching for a husband for your daughter. Why don’t you explain the final test?”

The middle-aged man was handsome and dashing. Hearing the words of the Patriarch, he clasped his hands respectfully and then looked at the group of people, eyes flashing like lightning. Then he glanced at Song Jia, and a warm, loving expression filled his face.

His voice cool, Song Muqiu said, “The final test in our search for a son-in-law is a bit different than the tests in previous generations. This is a test of a Cultivator’s Dao Heart!”

The Nascent Soul Cultivators frowned.

Elder Fan from the Solitary Sword Sect frowned and took a drink of alcohol. “Matters of Dao Hearts aren’t even clear to us, let alone these Foundation Establishment pups.”

“That is why this test is special,” replied Song Muqiu. “Elder Fan is correct, Dao Hearts are mysterious and unfathomable. Actually, the Song Clan believes that one of the most important aspects of the Dao Heart is determined by personality and behavior. The combination of the two, as well as a person’s stubbornness... that is the Dao Heart. Therefore, although today’s test is not conclusive, it will give us some inkling of what will be. Actually, as it relates to Dao Hearts, this test is actually a choice!” Having said this much, Song Muqiu closed his mouth and declined to comment further.

Everyone else sank into deep thought. As for Song Jia, she continued to watch Meng Hao within the cloud vortex, very curious as to what choice he would make during the final test....

Song Yunshu’s eyes flickered as he calmly watched the cloud vortex. He was Dao Child of the Song Clan, and yet, as he watched Meng Hao, an uneasy feeling welled up in his heart. He was used to concealing his emotions, though. His exterior was calm. But he was extremely curious to see what choice Meng Hao would make.

“As Dao Child of the Song Clan, I was able to take the test myself ahead of time. My choice....” Song Yunshu was lost in thought. He had only succeeded on his second try. Succeeding in such a fashion had earned him the praise of Patriarch Song Tian.

With a smile, Patriarch Song Tian said, “Muqiu makes it sound very complicated. The final test is a choice, and also a test of observation. I should make clear that the Dao Child of our Song Clan succeeded on his second attempt.” He glanced at Song Yuncai with a look of praise.

This caused everyone to grow even more curious. They all looked back down, waiting for Meng Hao to break through. They also peered at the group of Cultivators behind him, all of whom were waiting for their chance to spring forward.

Meng Hao began to move faster and faster. His fifth Dao Pillar was now eighty percent complete, and he now needed even more spiritual energy than before. Remembering the horrific scene that had accompanied the completion of his last Dao Pillar, Meng Hao wanted to be certain there was enough spiritual energy in this place before he reached the point of no return.

Otherwise, when the critical juncture arrived, then he would have no choice but to consume the other Cultivators. That was a path that Meng Hao refused to tread.

Cautiously, but quickly, he absorbed the spiritual energy. He proceeded, leaving behind some of the spiritual energy and moving on to the next layer. He was rapidly approaching the top of the tree. Because he had left behind some spiritual energy, the Cultivators behind him suddenly encountered the resisting pressure, and had no choice but to slow down.

They trudged on desperately. However, there was now more and more distance between them and Meng Hao. Wang Tengfei’s eyes were completely red. He pursued madly.

Meng Hao was now only fifteen hundred meters from the top of the tree.

One thousand meters. Five hundred meters. Two hundred fifty meters.... One hundred fifty. Fifty.... Meng Hao leaped up, surpassing the final gap to

stand on top of the tree.

At this moment, all eyes were upon him!

# Chapter 197: Sublime Spirit Scripture!

At this moment, the Song Clan Patriarch and Eccentric Song both stared at Meng Hao. In fact, without exception, all of the Song Clan members in the cloud layer were looking at him.

The attention of the Nascent Soul Cultivators of the five Sects and three Clans were all fixed on him as well.

To garner such attention showed how famous Meng Hao now was in the Southern Domain.

The Song Clansmen including Song Yunshu, plus Han Bei, Li Shiqi, Li Daoyi... everyone's attention was focused solely on Meng Hao.

The Chosen from the various Sects and Clans, regardless of their frustration or helplessness, regardless of what thoughts were running through their heads, were looking up at Meng Hao. Wang Tengfei, Fatty, Wang Youcai, Qian Shuihen, Lu Song....

Atop the tree, at the pinnacle of this world, Meng Hao stood alone, the focus of all the heavens.

As soon as he stepped foot on the top of the tree, he felt the boundless spiritual energy in the area sucking toward him. It was definitely enough to complete his fifth Dao Pillar. Far below the top of the tree, the massive sea seemed smaller; now it looked like a mirror.

Beyond the edges of the mirror, was nothingness.... This world was not limitless. In fact, in the midst of the nothingness could be seen what appeared to be handwriting, floating there faintly.

The ancient will of the World Tree; respect its strength, remember its intentions. Painted in the spot where the World Tree destroyed itself.

It was signed with three characters. Shui Dongliu.

"Shui Dongliu... could it be that this entire world is... a painting?" Meng Hao's eyes flickered as he stared at the words. Then he took a deep breath and allowed the spiritual energy to flow into him. The instant his fifth Dao Pillar reached ninety-percent completion, a person suddenly appeared up

ahead of him!

It was an old man who had the demeanor of a transcendent being. He wore a long, gray robe, and it was impossible to tell exactly how old he was. He was clearly ancient, although it was impossible to tell how many countless ages he had lived.

Meng Hao could sense no ripples emanating from the man's Cultivation base. It seemed as if he were a mortal, not a Cultivator. And yet, considering how ancient he was, how could he possibly be mortal?

The old man looked at Meng Hao, his face calm and filled with unspeakable dignity. It seemed as if even the Heavens would flee from before him.

The old man spoke, his voice cool, "The Heavens are not the Heavens, the Earth is not the Earth. The stars are eternal, and the Dao will always be!" His words floated out gently, much the same as his hair floated gently around his body. "This place does not belong to the Heavens, nor to the Earth. This painting of the World Tree contains endlessly flowing memories. Drink of them, and the great Dao in front of you will lead you to the utmost heights. Select a path upon which to approach me." Suddenly, nine snaking paths appeared among the twisted leaves of the tree's crown. They all led toward the old man, who stood only a few hundred meters up ahead.

Each path led to the same destination: the old man.

The old man lifted his hand. There between his fingers was a thumb-sized pearl. "Select a path upon which to approach me, and then take the pearl. Choose wrong, and you must start over."

The pearl was white, and seemed to contain an entire world within its depths. Looking at it, Meng Hao noticed that it was not round. For some reason, it seemed to be the shape of a cube. It was very bizarre.

Suddenly, Meng Hao could sense the three-colored Resurrection Lily inside of him being suppressed slightly.

"Nine paths. And I have to pick one...." he frowned. By this time, Wang

Tengfei and the others were approaching. However, they weren't able to step onto the treetop. It seemed that there was some invisible force that prevented more than one person from being atop the tree.

Meng Hao thought for a while as he looked over the nine paths. He had no clue how to select a path. He looked at the man up ahead, and then his eyes gleamed. The man was holding the pearl with three fingers! After thinking for another moment, Meng Hao took a deep breath and then walked forward onto the third path.

The instant his foot stepped down on the path, the world seemed to turn upside down. A roaring filled his ears, and everything grew blurry for a moment. When everything became clear, he found that he was now at the very bottom of the tree!

He was only a few hundred meters from the surface of the sea, falling downward. His mind reeled, and he forced himself to a stop. Looking up, he saw Wang Tengfei climbing up onto the top of the tree.

"I chose wrong, so I have to start over...." He frowned. Selecting a path seemed to involve little more than random guessing. How could one pick, other than going through the paths one by one?

Meng Hao muttered to himself for a moment. Then, his eyes flashed as he saw Wang Tengfei falling down from the top of the tree like a shooting star. He, too, had failed, and had to start from the beginning, at the sea beneath the tree.

Meng Hao leaped into action, heading up toward the top of the tree at top speed. In the time it takes for half an incense stick to burn, he was less than three thousand meters away from the top. During that time, he witnessed over ten Cultivators falling down toward the ocean.

Meanwhile, up in the cloud layer, the Nascent Soul Cultivators watched on with furrowed brows. Having seen everything that happened, they broke into discussions.

"Nine paths. How can one know which path to choose...? It must involve careful observation. The answer doesn't lie in blind luck, but with that old man!"



“He is not emanating any Cultivation base ripples, and yet emanates a profound air. Perhaps the answer to the riddle is hidden in the words he spoke....”

“No wonder this test requires careful observation. There doesn’t seem to be any clear solution. For the Song Clan Dao Child to have passed the test in two tries really is worthy of admiration.”

Han Bei looked at the scene playing out on the tree. Her eyes shined with interest. After thinking for a moment, she said. “The fourth path from the left!”

Li Daoyi’s eyes flashed. Having heard that the Song Clan Dao Child passed the test in two tries, he felt a sense of competition rising within him. He slowly said, “The fourth path from the right. That path doesn’t look special. But the leaves there are somewhat thicker. Furthermore, the old man seemed to pause slightly after every fourth word he spoke!”

Li Shiqi’s eyes also flickered, but she said nothing. She was lost in thought as she stared at the nine paths.

Song Yunshu’s expression was placid, but in his heart, he sighed. He had succeeded in two tries, but in fact, it had all been a matter of luck. He actually had no idea how he had succeeded.

Patriarch Song Tian laughed but said nothing. Hearing the discussions, he shook his head and fixed his attention to the top of the tree. Meng Hao was nearing it again.

Meng Hao moved quickly, and the three thousand meters whizzed by. The only people left at the top of the tree were Fatty and others from the Golden Frost Sect. Seeing Meng Hao approach, Fatty immediately made way for him.

Meng Hao nodded. Another person up above failed, after which Meng Hao’s body flashed and appeared for a second time on the treetop. By this time, his fifth Dao Pillar was more than ninety percent complete. There wasn’t much spiritual energy left, but Meng Hao was certain it was enough to complete the Dao Pillar.

He took a deep breath as he stood there atop the tree. He gazed at the old man, then recalled his words again as he looked over the paths again. Then, he stepped forward onto the fourth path!

He had made exactly the same choice as Han Bei!

However, the moment he stepped onto it, everything turned upside down, and he was again shooting down toward the sea beneath the tree.

“I’m really starting to dislike this place!” he thought, his eyes filling with both frustration and determination.

All of the Chosen from the various Sects and Clans who had failed once were now making their second attempts. And yet, one after another, they failed, falling downward just like Meng Hao.

Meng Hao went up to try a third time.

By this time, everyone was watching with strange expressions. They were all lost in thought, trying to figure out what they had overlooked. Which path was correct?

More discussions broke out among the Nascent Soul Cultivators.

“This place is very mysterious. These kids have all had two chances each, and between the lot of them, have tried every one of the nine paths.”

“Clearly, the correct path changes. The route is not fixed. It seems that luck does have quite a bit of a role.”

Han Bei frowned, continuing to look on. She was now starting to form another opinion on which path was the correct one.

“There’s no need to get anxious, friends,” said Patriarch Song Tian. He laughed. “To find the correct path, each person must observe matters carefully. It will all depend on their Dao Heart.”

Atop the massive tree beneath the cloud vortex, Meng Hao shot back upward. He was currently about nine thousand meters from the top of the tree when suddenly his Dao Pillar reached the point where it was only a sliver away from being completed. The same phenomenon that had appeared in the Song Clan, once again began to occur.

His body immediately began to wither. Thankfully, there was plenty of spiritual energy in this place. The unbridled suction power of the Dao Pillar began to absorb all of the spiritual energy, no matter how far away it was. Each and every bit of it rushed toward Meng Hao.

His face was ruddy as he felt his Cultivation base climbing upward. He shot upward, and was soon only three thousand meters from the top. His mind began to reel.

A booming sound could be heard, and Meng Hao's face flickered as suddenly, a golden light began to collect inside of him. His Cultivation base started rotating, causing the light to shine outward. It seemed as if it wished to eclipse the World Tree!

Amidst the golden glow, streams of magical symbols appeared. They were indistinct, but the instant they appeared, they caused the entire world to be filled with a golden color.

Up above, looks of disbelief appeared on the faces of the Nascent Soul Cultivators. One by one, they stood up. "That's...."

"The Sublime Spirit Scripture!" said one of the other Nascent Soul Cultivators breathlessly.

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# Chapter 198: The Number One Person in Foundation Establishment!

The Nascent Soul Cultivators couldn't keep their cool. One by one, they began to speak, their eyes shining with unprecedented brightness.

"That's... that's definitely the power of one of the three great classic scriptures. That golden glow... it's a sign of the Sublime Spirit Scripture!!"

"That kid cultivates with the Sublime Spirit Scripture. That scripture has supposedly been lost for years. There are only fragments left. How did this kid get the whole scripture!?!?"

"From the looks of it, he acquired the Qi Condensation Manual of the Sublime Spirit Scripture. Supposedly, it appeared a few hundred years ago in the State of Zhao, and was used by a man named Patriarch Reliance. His Cultivation base was unfathomable...."

Their eyes were on Meng Hao, but what they were really paying attention to was the Sublime Spirit Scripture!!

Each and every one of them could crush Meng Hao between their fingers like he was nothing; he wouldn't be able to fight back in the least. Whichever one of them got their hands on Meng Hao, would actually be acquiring the Sublime Spirit Scripture.

Such a text would be indescribably useful to any Sect. Whoever acquired it would be in the position to sweep across the Southern Domain with impunity.

That Sect would become incomparable, and would without fail become the overlord of the Southern Domain!

How could these Nascent Soul Cultivators not be excited? Even if Meng Hao succeeded in becoming a son-in-law of the Song Clan, they would still no doubt crazily pursue him regardless of anything!

In any case, Meng Hao currently was not a member of the Song Clan, and was only one participant among many.

It wasn't appropriate to make a move at the moment, but once Meng Hao emerged, all of the Sects and Clans in the Southern Domain would want to grab him. In such an event, his life wouldn't be important. To get the Sublime Spirit Scripture, there wasn't a single Nascent Soul Cultivator who would hesitate to use Spirit Searching on Meng Hao to drag out the Sublime Spirit Scripture.

The result of such a Spirit Searching would cause his soul to fly away and scatter!

[ TL Notes : "The soul to fly away and scatter" is an idiom that means to be frightened to death. In my opinion, Er Gen is using to mean that he will actually die. He uses this idiom more in the future, and usually it seems to mean actual death. I will translate the idiom in this way and let you decide for yourself ]

As soon as the Sublime Spirit Scripture appeared, Meng Hao instantly became the prey of all of these super Sects of the Southern Domain!

It was obvious what everyone was thinking. The Nascent Soul Cultivators' eyes glittered. This was the Song Clan, but sooner or later, someone would make a move. They all glanced over at the Song Clan Patriarch.

Meng Hao had openly revealed his secret of possessing the Sublime Spirit Scripture. It would without fail arouse the lust of any Sect or Clan. However, in terms of positioning, the Song Clan currently had the clear advantage.

As the Nascent Soul Cultivators looked over at the Song Clan Patriarch, they discreetly retrieved transmission jade slips and crushed them between their fingers. This instantly sent notifications back to their various Sects and Clans.

Eccentric Song watched the scene in shock. The rest of the Song Clan members all seem to be in shock. Patriarch Song Tian suddenly stood up. His eyes shone mysteriously, and he was breathing heavily. However, he then recalled what had happened within the Clan earlier, along with the warning transmitted by the Dao Reserve Patriarch, and his eyes filled with

determination.

“This Meng Hao...” he said, “must not be provoked! Whoever causes problems for him is seeking death!” He flicked his sleeve. “Ladies and gentlemen, you are in the Song Clan!” His words echoed out like thunder, causing the faces of the Nascent Soul Cultivators to tighten. Blood seeped out of the corners of their mouths. Their eyes glistened with fear as they stared at the Song Clan Patriarch.

“Regardless of what objectives you might have, this is the Song Clan’s search for a son-in-law,” he said, his eyes shining. “Whoever succeeds will become a son-in-law of the Song Clan. Once everyone emerges, there will be time for your greed. However, if Meng Hao becomes the son-in-law of the Song Clan, then it must be viewed as the will of the Heavens.”

“Elder Song, we will naturally comply with your words,” said the Nascent Soul Cultivator from the Black Sieve Sect, smiling.

The rest of the Nascent Soul Cultivators all agreed slowly, pretending not to pay any attention to Meng Hao. However, in their hearts, they were preparing for the arrival of fellow Sect members.

Patriarch Song Tian was of course well aware of that. He sighed inwardly and said nothing more, continuing to gaze at the golden world within the cloud vortex.

Magical symbols appeared in the golden glow that spread out from Meng Hao. This was none other than the Sublime Spirit Scripture.

Observers would be able to make out the details of the magical symbols, but would be unable to commit them to memory. The only thing they would be able to remember would be a blur.

In the Southern Domain, there are three classic scriptures. Only one of them emits a golden glow... the Sublime Spirit Scripture!

There were no records of the origin of the scripture, or of who created it. There were many legends, though. One stated that it had been created by an eminently powerful Cultivator of the Dao Seeking stage who had walked the path of the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

However, such a matter seemed too monumental. As such, many people refused to believe such a legend.

Regardless, each of the seven manuals of the Sublime Spirit Scripture could be considered precious treasures. In fact, the reason that the Violet Fate Sect became one of the great Sects was because it had acquired a fragment of the Core Formation manual of the Sublime Spirit Scripture.

Just a fragment of one of the manuals could give birth to a great Sect; this alone demonstrates the boundlessness of the Sublime Spirit Scripture!

Practicing the Cultivation of the Sublime Spirit Scripture would eventually cause the body to reach the point where it would emit magical scriptures. This is a special state, and a special sign!

Such a state could only be reached after nine Dao Pillars had been formed. Then it would become visible. However, because Meng Hao had a Perfect Foundation, he was in a unique position with his Five Dao Pillars. That was why the sign made itself visible now.

Of course, this turn of events exceeded Meng Hao's powers of anticipation and caught him completely unawares. His heart instantly filled with vigilance, and he immediately pulled out the good luck charm and prepared it for activation.

As the scripture floated out from his body and the golden glow filled the entire world, the Chosen from the various Sects looked up at him in astonishment and shock.

Fatty gasped and began to mutter to himself. "That's Meng Hao for you. He was awesome in the Reliance Sect. Then he came to the Southern Domain and seduced Chu Yuyan. Now he's showing off even more power...."

Wang Youcai stared wordlessly at the golden light. Inside, similar waves of admiration filled his heart.

As for Wang Tengfei, he felt as if he had been struck by lightning. His body shook. A sense of unwillingness wanted to rise up within him, and yet he was forced to admit that Meng Hao... was no longer someone he

could afford to look down upon.

In fact, fear began to well up in Wang Tengfei's heart; not even ten years had passed since they last met. After another ten years, how much further would Meng Hao have surpassed him? Wang Tengfei didn't even dare to think about what would occur if one day, he himself was still in the Foundation Establishment stage, but Meng Hao reached Core Formation. If they met again at that time, what would happen...?

The stir caused by what was happening now far exceeded the recent spectacle created by Meng Hao when he had climbed the tree.

He panted as intense booming sounds filled his body. They far exceeded the roaring he had experienced when he created his fourth Dao Pillar in the Xiao Clan, so much so that Meng Hao's heart shook and his flesh leaped.

He felt his fifth Dao Pillar being completed. After the space of a few breaths passed, his head suddenly resounded with an enormous roar. Finally, his fifth Dao Pillar appeared in full!!

His fifth Perfect Dao Pillar!

With this fifth Dao Pillar, his Cultivation base rocketed to new heights. Blinding golden light shined out from him, and the magical symbols of the Sublime Spirit Scripture revolved around him in circles. They seemed as if they were prostrating themselves toward Meng Hao.

Every breath he took caused the symbols to flutter. Every blink of his eye caused the golden light to shine even more blindingly. His Cultivation base rose higher and his battle prowess soared. Meng Hao was transforming in an unprecedented fashion!!

Suddenly, Tribulation clouds appeared in the mountains of the Song Clan, and they lingered for some time before dissipating.

Meng Hao's long hair floated about him, and his body filled with an indescribable might. As the roaring continued to echo out, his heart began to thump. He took a deep breath as he allowed all the feelings to wash over him. The explosive growth of his Cultivation base caused his battle



might to far exceed his previous pinnacle.

Meng Hao was now convinced that at the moment, he could easily sweep across the entire Foundation Establishment stage. Regardless of Chosen or Dao Children, all of them were beneath him. He had a Perfect Foundation and five Dao Pillars; he was invincible within the Foundation Establishment stage!!

In front of him, all Foundations except for Flawless Foundations, could be crushed by his Perfect Foundation.

At the same time, however, a profound sense of danger welled up within him. He knew that everyone outside was watching him. The scripture symbols which were floating around him were obviously from the Sublime Spirit Scripture.

Despite the feeling of danger, determination filled Meng Hao's eyes. Fingering the good luck symbol, he leaped forward. This place was already devoid of spiritual energy, so he shot forward toward the treetop, surrounded by the golden glow.

"So far no one has come down after me. There's definitely not much time left...." Meng Hao was nervous, but also wasn't willing to leave quite yet. His goal, the Cubic Pearl, was still there for the taking. Then he could escape with the good luck charm.

"If the charm could get me out of the ancient Blessed Land, then this place will naturally be no problem either!" The good luck charm needed time to prepare, so at the same time as he poured power from his Cultivation base into it, he shot upward. Utilizing the strength of his five Perfect Dao Pillars, he shot past the final three thousand meters to arrive at the empty treetop.

The gray-robed old man stood there. The nine paths in front of him had been affected by the golden glow, and now appeared to be paths of gold.

This was Meng Hao's third time standing here. His eyes glowed brightly. The time had come to make his final choice. The choice he made... was one that only Meng Hao could make!!

# Chapter 199: The Tenth Path!

Currently, all of the Nascent Soul eccentrics up in the clouds watched on with shining eyes. If they weren't in the Song Clan, they would have long since taken action. They were frightened, but had already made preparations. In their opinion, Meng Hao was like a turtle in a jar. He couldn't escape even if he sprouted wings.

The only thing they needed to worry about was the Song Clan. The importance of the Qi Condensation Manual of the Sublime Spirit Scripture was hard to describe. Actually, many of them couldn't understand how it was possible that their various Sects had permitted the scripture to remain in the Reliance Sect, and had chosen not to go take it....

Their eyes flickered as they watched on. They were simply waiting for Meng Hao to come out, and for backup from their Sects to arrive.

However... the Nascent Soul Eccentric from the Black Sieve Sect's eyes flickered with something else, undetectable to the others. The jade slip which he had crushed contained details different from that of the others. Not only had he passed on the information about the Sublime Spirit Scripture, but also news that he had tracked down Meng Hao.

Orders had already been issued by the Patriarchs of the Black Sieve Sect to search for the person who had snatched away Ultimate Vexation. The news hadn't been broadcast on the outside, of course, and their search could only be conducted secretly. Therefore, the appearance of the Sublime Spirit Scripture was not a good development for the Black Sieve Sect.

"All of the Sects are now paying attention to him," thought the Black Sieve Sect Nascent Soul Cultivator, his eyes flickering. "I need to grab him first, before all his secrets are revealed!" A cold smile appeared on his face. "Ancient Blessed Lands cannot contain this guy. He has a good luck charm from the ancient Good Luck Sect. He can go anywhere in the world." He was the only one among the Nascent Soul Cultivators who knew that this

phantom fragment of the World Tree was incapable of keeping Meng Hao trapped within it. He wasn't worried, though. Once the Black Sieve Sect learned that Meng Hao had the good luck charm, they had instituted a slew of contingency plans.

Down beneath the cloud vortex, in the glowing, golden world, Meng Hao took a deep breath. He stared at the old man, who stood only a few hundred meters away on the treetop.

They were separated by nine paths, all of which glowed with golden light. Three of the paths actually seemed to glow a bit brighter than the others.

"How do I pick...?" Meng Hao stood there thoughtfully for a brief moment. Then, a cold light gleamed within his eyes. He had made two choices before and had failed both times. This was his third chance. If he failed again, he knew that he would never get a fourth chance.

In actuality, Meng Hao had already guessed which path was the correct one to take. It was the same path he had walked before. If a person truly wishes to practice Cultivation, they must have persistence, and not easily change their mind. This was the key to treading the nine paths in front of him.

"But that choice... is not a choice born of my will...." Meng Hao's eyes shone with coldness. He moved forward, and as he did, all of the Nascent Soul Cultivators above watched on. Even though the entire world was filled with the blinding golden light, their vision could pierce through it to observe the proceedings.

The instant Meng Hao shot forward, his five Perfect Dao Pillars exploded with power invincible to the rest of the Foundation Establishment stage. The golden glow grew thicker, and his speed increased.

However... he did not pick any of the nine leafy paths. Instead, he flew up into the air and... shot directly toward the gray-robed old man. All of this takes some time to describe, but actually happened in the blink of an eye. Meng Hao completely bypassed the nine paths to appear directly in front of the old man. He lifted his hand, and his Cultivation base rippled

out. Instantly, a six hundred meter long Flame Dragon appeared and then slammed down onto the old man.

Meng Hao lowered his hand, causing the Cubic Pearl to fly out of the old man's hand and into his own. The old man didn't do anything whatsoever to stop him. As the Flame Dragon engulfed him and the pearl was snatched away, a mysterious light appeared in his eyes, and a slight smile touched the corners of his mouth.

The old man's archaic voice filled the air. "You obviously realized which path was the correct one to take. Why make this choice?" As the voice echoed out, the golden glow that filled the world was suddenly suppressed. Now, all of the Chosen from the various Sects and Clans could clearly see what was happening on top of the tree.

The sight filled them with shock. Expressions of disbelief covered their faces as they saw the gray-robed old man being engulfed in flames. Meng Hao floated in mid-air. It was impossible for them to miss the fact that he had not picked any of the paths on the treetop, but had instead chosen to kill the old man.

"He dared to attack?!"

"This... this... this Meng Hao chose not to walk one of the paths. He chose to attack?! How could this be?"

"That old man is completely unfathomable.... You can tell from a single glance that he's beyond ordinary. This place is just too bizarre. I can't believe Meng Hao dared to attack! Dammit... how come I didn't think of that?!?"

Even as the Chosen beneath the treetop expressed their shock, the Nascent Soul eccentrics up above instantly shot to their feet, their eyes fixed upon Meng Hao.

This was especially true of Patriarch Song Tian. He gasped, and a glow of disbelief radiated from his eyes. A serious expression filled his face.

It wasn't just him. Eccentric Song, Han Bei, Li Shiqi, Li Daoyi, as well as Song Clan Dao Child Song Yunshu all stared with completely disbelief.

Panting, Song Yunshu stared fixedly at Meng Hao. He had participated in this test and had succeeded on the second try after picking the same path as the first time. However, he had never imagined that you could actually raise a hand against the gray-robed old man.

“How could he do such a thing?” said Song Yunshu said hoarsely. “That’s the Spirit of the tree....”

It was at this moment that everyone heard the old man’s question echoing out from within the flames. It was the exact same question that was running through the heads of all the observers.

Why had he chosen such a path?

“Conforming to convention is emptiness,” replied Meng Hao. “Yielding to and complying with the Heavens is well and good. Unending persistence is fine, too. However, I cannot choose either of those.” Having said this, he shot up into the air!

He would not comply with rules of this place, but would instead create his own path. He was like the Perfect Foundation, not permitted by Heaven and Earth, and the target of extermination by Tribulation Lightning. However, he would continue onward. That was how he differentiated himself from others; his path was not one of inflexible adherence to the rules. As such, why would he follow the rules of this place? Why would he pick the correct path out of the nine?

He had chosen to break through and take the pearl by force, by slaughtering! He knew that he could succeed by persisting in treading the path from before. However, this so-called persistence was actually just a method of following the rules; it was not true persistence!

The old man’s laughter rang out from within the flames. His ancient smile was filled with happiness, as well as anticipation. He gave Meng Hao a deep look, allowing the flames to consume him. Soon, his body was gone.

As the old man disappeared and Meng Hao shot up into the air, the Chosen down below in the tree looked up mutely. They stared at Meng Hao in shock, their hearts in turmoil, incapable of calming down. Meng

Hao's choice had been simple, but not many people were capable of simplicity such as this.

They lived lives of compliance, lives in which rules must be followed. Perhaps the subconscious desire existed within them to break out of the rules, but they would never be able to imagine how to do so.

Meng Hao, however, was different!

Wang Tengfei's face was pale white, and Wang Youcai was speechless. Fatty's face slowly filled with even deeper admiration. Meng Hao's words just now had left a permanent impression on all of their hearts.

When they heard his words, the Nascent Soul Cultivators in the clouds above all gasped. As they looked at Meng Hao, the same thought filled each and every one of them.

"If this kid lives, he will definitely achieve a high position within the Southern Domain!"

Such a personality, such mentality, such tactics... all of it led the Nascent Soul Cultivators to the same conclusion. Meng Hao might have the Sublime Spirit Scripture, but as of now, they didn't want to capture him and use Spirit Searching to retrieve it. That would lead to his death.

If they could get Meng Hao to join their Sect, they could help him grow into a truly powerful expert of the Sect!

Li Daoyi's eyes glowed with a powerful light; an intense desire to do battle fermented within him. Li Shiqi's eyes also glowed brightly; looking at Meng Hao down beneath the cloud vortex, she also suddenly desired to have a rematch.

Han Bei looked at Meng Hao thoughtfully. Deep within her eyes flickered a sense of admiration and praise. She couldn't help but think that if she had been in Meng Hao's place, she would have picked to follow the original path. She would never have had the resolve of Meng Hao. In retrospect, it seemed like an easy decision, but in reality, it was something almost no one would ever think of doing.

Song Yunshu sat in thought. Next to him, Song Jia gazed at Meng Hao.

Everything that was happening was being burned deeply into her mind.

“Conforming to convention is emptiness,” said Patriarch Song Tian.  
“Well said!” His voice echoed out as he stood up.

The surrounding Nascent Soul Cultivator’s hearts began to thump; the situation was not unfolding well for them.

“This kid has managed to take the Cubic Pearl. Whoever he is, whoever he has offended in the past, this daughter of the Song Clan is now his! Who here dares to touch him!?” Hearing his words caused everyone to sit there thoughtfully. And yet, none of them seemed to notice the meaning within Patriarch Song Tian’s words. What he had said was strange; he never mentioned anything about marrying into the family. His words seemed to have a deeper meaning.

At this exact moment, the bright glow of multiple spells filled the air outside of the Sun and Moon mountains of the Song Clan. Powerful Qi suddenly appeared, as figure after figure emerged.

The five Sects and two Clans had arrived to investigate!

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# Chapter 200: Killing Amidst the Night Rain!

At the same moment that the five Sects and two Clans appeared outside of the Sun and Moon mountains of the Song Clan, Meng Hao was inside the world of the cloud vortex, shooting upward. All eyes were upon him as he pressed down on the good luck charm in his hand, pouring power from his Cultivation base into it.

He had begun to prepare the good luck charm much earlier, so the instant he poured spiritual energy into it, an enormous black hole appeared just in front of him in the sky. All of the Chosen and Nascent Soul eccentrics saw this happen.

The swirling vortex seemed to transform into a gaping mouth that instantly swallowed up Meng Hao. From below, the Chosen of the various Sects watched on in open-mouthed shock. The Nascent Soul Cultivators could only watch as he disappeared right in front of them. How could they ever have predicted that this would happen?

Seeing Meng Hao disappear, the Nascent Soul Cultivators were incapable of maintaining their calm. At almost the exact same time, they shot to their feet and flew toward the cloud vortex. Patriarch Song Tian sighed inwardly. He'd had no choice but to speak the words he had just now. However, even if this was Song Clan territory, it would be difficult to stand up against all the five Sects and two Clans. For Meng Hao to make an escape on his own was actually for the best.

At the moment, Song Tian couldn't really prevent the Nascent Soul Cultivators from attempting to pursue Meng Hao. However, moments later, unsightly expressions appeared on their faces. They could clearly see that Meng Hao had used some sort of powerful magic to teleport away.

"It turns out a trifling Foundation Establishment Cultivator like him has a precious teleportation treasure. What other mysteries is this Meng Hao hiding?!"



“The Sublime Spirit Scripture, a precious teleportation treasure. The Violet Fate Sect will definitely get our hands on him!”

The Nascent Soul Cultivators returned, and the representatives of the five Sects and two Clans approached. Meng Hao’s good luck charm teleported him away. Meanwhile...

In the Black Sieve Sect, in the number one mountain which was situated in the very center of the Hundred Thousand Mountains, smoke curled into the air above a massive incense burner. At the moment, dozens of Cultivators began to shoot up and disappear into the smoke.

Down below, Patriarch Violet Sieve and the beautiful, middle-aged woman stood there grimly. They watched as the Cultivators above began to vanish.

Patriarch Violet Sieve frowned and said, “He’s using that good luck charm, which makes him difficult to track. If we dispatched Core Formation disciples, or magical items that can employ the power of Core Formation, then it would interfere with the Tri-Black Incense Burner, making it difficult to accurately pinpoint the teleportation ripples. The slightest mistake, and we could be hundreds of kilometers off. Furthermore, the Tri-Black Incense Burner can only be used once per month.”

“It doesn’t matter,” replied the beautiful woman coolly. “We may not be able to use Core Formation disciples, but Zhou Jie [1] is among the Foundation Establishment disciples we sent. Considering his Cultivation base, as well as his status as Dao Child, he’ll be able to distract Meng Hao. He only needs to keep him in place for a bit. The others can prepare the spell, and then we can be there in an instant. At that time, Meng Hao wouldn’t be able to escape even if he was given wings.”

[ TL Notes : 1. Zhou Jie’s name in Chinese is 周杰 Zhōu jié – Zhou is a common family name. Jie means “outstanding” or “heroic” ]

“Don’t forget, we don’t know how many times he can use the good luck charm. If it was complete, then he would be able to use it seven times in total.” He watched thoughtfully as the last of the disciples vanished into

the smoke above the Tri-Black Incense Burner.

“Don’t worry,” replied the beautiful woman, smiling. “Meng Hao is only at the mid Foundation Establishment stage. Based on the information in the ancient records, I did some calculation. Based on his Cultivation base, it should take him the time it takes two incense sticks to burn to be able to activate the good luck charm. As long as Zhou Jie and the others can hold him off for that amount of time, and prepare the spell, then Meng Hao is doomed. He’s nothing but a trifling Foundation Establishment Cultivator. Don’t worry, Elder Brother Violet Sieve. After that much time passes, we will be there in front of Meng Hao.”

As they continued their discussion, somewhere in an unnamed part of the Southern Domain, in the midst of a mountain range filled with hundreds of mountains, dark clouds filled the sky and lightning crashed down. A roaring filled the sky, causing the wild beasts in these desolate mountains to tremble, seemingly awed by the Heavens.

Great, bean-sized drops of rain poured down from the sky in a torrent. It was currently sunset, but the sun was completely covered by the clouds, making everything completely dark and hazy.

A lightning bolt slashed through the sky, and then suddenly ripples expanded out into the air, splitting the sheets of rain. A massive, swirling black hole appeared, and out staggered Meng Hao, his face pale. He immediately looked around.

The black hole disappeared, and rain fell onto Meng Hao. He didn’t even seem to notice it as he examined his surroundings. Finally, he let out a sigh of relief.

A cracking sound emanated from his hand. He looked down and could see that another large fissure had appeared on the surface of the good luck charm. It seemed he would only be able to use it a few more times before it shattered.

“This is a life-saving treasure,” he thought. “I can’t just use it lightly....” He hesitated for a moment, and then took a deep breath. His body suddenly vibrated. The rainwater shot away from him, and his clothes

were no longer soaked.

“At the moment, I imagine all the Sects and Clans are looking for me.” He frowned. The golden glow of the Sublime Spirit Scripture had not been something he’d anticipated. Of course, he’d had no other choice than to flee.

“Thankfully, I got the Cubic Pearl. I wonder if it will be able to dispel the poison of the three-colored Resurrection Lily...?” His eyes began to glow, and he decided to go search for a quiet place in the mountains to carve out an Immortal’s cave and test out whether or not the poison could be dispelled. He had just taken a step when suddenly his expression flickered.

The place where the black hole had appeared moments ago had already returned to normal. And yet suddenly, he could see that another hole was opening up. It was pitch black inside and emanated a rippling power that caused the rain in the area to fly away.

Killing intent flickered within Meng Hao’s eyes. He could choose to flee. After all, the sudden appearance of this vortex could not be a coincidence. It must be someone pursuing him by tracking the ripples of his teleportation.

But he did not choose to flee. Rather, a cold light, threatening and determined, appeared in his eyes. He could flee for ten or so breaths worth of time, but instead, he decided that he might as well stay and attack.

As the thought coalesced into his mind, he began to stride forward. He waved his hand, and an enormous Wind Blade and Flame Dragon appeared, which shot toward the black hole and then slammed into it.

As the roaring Flame Dragon slammed into the black hole, a booming sound filled the air. The black hole began to fall apart. As it did, the shadows of dozens of Cultivators appeared. They began to coalesce, as if they were about to emerge.

Without hesitating, Meng Hao lifted his hand and bit down hard on one of his fingers. The Blood Finger technique instantly descended onto the weakened black hole.

Boom!

The massive booming sound drowned out the sound of crashing thunder. The black hole shook and then exploded into pieces. There were no blood-curdling screams. However, of the dozens of Cultivators who had been about to emerge, only half made it out alive!

The other half were wiped out with the destruction of the black hole!

Bloodless killing. It was only possible because of Meng Hao's decisiveness. Had he hesitated or fled, daring not to make a move, then he would now be facing not a dozen or so enemies, but double the current amount.

The dozen or so people who had appeared immediately erupted with the power of late Foundation Establishment. One in their midst was a man with long, dark hair. He was tall, slender and handsome, with thin lips and a strange glow in his eyes. His Cultivation base was at the great circle of Foundation Establishment, the False Core stage!

"Black Sieve Sect!" Meng Hao's eyes narrowed. He instantly recognized the garments of these Cultivators. His killing intent climbed higher. Now that he knew it was the Black Sieve Sect, everything made sense. He didn't say another word. From this moment forth he would attack with decisiveness, and not the slightest bit of hesitation.

He stepped forward, his five Perfect Dao Pillars rotating. They didn't leak the slightest bit of power. The raindrops around him vibrated as he approached the nearest Black Sieve Sect Cultivator.

The man gave a cold snort. He lifted his hand, and the illusory image of a large hand appeared, which shot toward Meng Hao. Without so much as a word, the other surrounding Cultivators also made beelines for Meng Hao.

Only the False Core stage Cultivator didn't make a move. Off in the distance, he slapped his bag of holding to produce an incense burner about the size of a hand. He rubbed it, which caused it to ignite.

Smoke rose up into the air, congealing into concentric rings of magical

symbols. It looked very much like a teleportation portal.

At the same time that the portal appeared, Meng Hao was closing in on the Black Sieve Sect Cultivator who had summoned the illusory hand. The Cultivator smiled ferociously. As far as he was concerned, this whole mission was really making a mountain out of a mole-hill. Being in the late Foundation Establishment stage, he could easily deal with a mid Foundation Establishment stage Cultivator. Wiping him out would be simple.

“I, Xie, shall get the credit for this one!” he said, laughing. He shot forward, and as he did so, a multitude of glowing spikes suddenly emerged from his shoulders. He clearly planned to slam them directly into Meng Hao.

Meng Hao’s expression was the same as ever. He lifted his hand and pressed his finger into the approaching illusory hand. A boom sounded out, and the hand immediately disintegrated into countless shards. The Black Sieve Sect Cultivator named Xie stared in shock as Meng Hao closed in on him.

Meng Hao didn’t even look at the man. The power of his Cultivation base, which he had been concealing up to now, suddenly exploded out.

Boom!

Pressure billowed out from Meng Hao, and suddenly he was directly in front of the Cultivator. His hand shot out and clasped around the man’s neck. Eyes cold, he squeezed.

A cracking sound could be heard, and the Cultivator’s eyes bulged in death!

This was killing amidst the night rain!

# Chapter 201: The Dao Child Fights!

This could also be considered bloodless killing, because any shed blood was instantly cleansed by the pouring rain. The cleansing nature of the rain made Meng Hao more than happy to fight in the downpour. He didn't waste power from his Cultivation base to push the rain away from him.

He slowly released his hand and then turned. Rainwater poured off of his chin and hair, soaking his clothes. Lightning flashed in the darkness of night, and Meng Hao suddenly seemed to emanate a demonic aura.

The surrounding Black Sieve Sect disciples were shocked. They looked at Meng Hao, not with contempt, but with concentration.

The Black Sieve Sect Dao Child Zhou Jie looked at Meng Hao with narrowed eyes. He didn't attack, though, but continued to hold aloft the incense burner. Smoke curled up from it and was rapidly coalescing in mid-air. "Kill this person at any cost," he said, his cold voice ringing out in the dark, stormy night.

There were more than ten Cultivators surrounding Meng Hao. Hearing the words of the Dao Child, they immediately prepared to attack. Magical techniques and treasured weapons of all sorts instantly bore down on Meng Hao. Booming sounds filled the air. This would be the most intense battle Meng Hao had ever faced; each and every one of these Cultivators was of the late Foundation Establishment stage.

As a matter of fact, a small Sect wouldn't even be able to produce so many Cultivators of this level. A medium-sized Sect, even if they had so many, would never dispatch them all simultaneously. To any Sect, disciples of the late Foundation Establishment stage were luck from the Heavens. If even one from a group this size could reach Core Formation, he would be crucially important to the Sect.

Only a super Sect like the Black Sieve Sect had such extensive resources to be able to afford to dispatch so many late Foundation Establishment Cultivators.

Meng Hao's eyes flickered. If he had not created his fifth Dao Pillar, then

this battle would be extremely difficult, and potentially fatal. But now, with his fifth Dao Pillar, he was invincible to the battle power of the Foundation Establishment stage. Actually, you could say that currently, Meng Hao was the most powerful person under the Core Formation stage in the entire Southern Domain!

He laughed coldly as the Black Sieve Sect disciples approached. His left hand made a grasping motion in the air, and immediately, the Flame Dragon appeared in the form of the Flying Rain-Dragon. It didn't completely appear, however. Meng Hao simply borrowed some of its heat to transform the surrounding sheets of rainwater into a thick mist.

As the mist roiled about, Meng Hao slapped his bag of holding, and the two wooden swords flew out. They circled around him for a moment, and then shot away.

The mist seethed, covering up the entire area so that nothing was visible. The heat in the area continued to turn the rain into mist. Thunder pealed out, and lightning crashed down. One after another, blood-curdling screams rang out from within the mist.

Meng Hao's shadow flitted about inside, carrying death with it. The two wooden swords swept out in front of him, severing the head of a Black Sieve Sect disciple. The disciple's eyes filled with astonishment in the instant before he died.

The sounds of slaughter drifted out. Meng Hao moved like a specter. Cracking sounds rang out from his right hand as he crushed another Cultivator. He tossed the body up ahead to block an incoming spear. A boom rang out as the corpse exploded to pieces. Meng Hao strode forward.

He waved his right arm, summoning the Wind Blade. It shot out, slicing another body to bits. The pieces of the corpse shot out from the mist and fell onto the ground.

Zhou Jie frowned when he saw this. However, he continued to manipulate the incense burner. The smoke drifting up from it appeared to be about sixty percent congealed.

Suddenly, another miserable shriek sounded out from within the mist. A Black Sieve Sect disciple, his body half destroyed, stumbled out. Just when it seemed he would escape successfully, Meng Hao's hand shot out and grabbed him by the top of the head. He pushed down, and the Cultivator screamed. Meng Hao's face emerged for a moment from the mist. He looked over at Zhou Jie.

Zhou Jie looked back, and as their gazes locked, Meng Hao smiled, and then disappeared back into the mist. He released his hand, and the Black Sieve Sect disciple slumped to the ground dead, his eyes still wide open.

Zhou Jie trembled at the sight of it, and an unsightly expression appeared on his face. The screams from within the mist seemed to be growing further and further apart. The booms grew weaker. Suddenly, a figure emerged from the mist.

"Elder Brother Zhou, save me!" cried one of the Black Sieve Sect disciples. His right arm had been severed, and a horrified expression covered his face. Despite his all-out push to escape, the words were barely out of his mouth when a meter-long phantom hand shot out from the mist. It moved at incredible speed, catching up to the escaping Cultivator in the blink of an eye.

It slammed into him, and a deafening explosion filled the air. The Cultivator's body began to tremble, and he opened his mouth to say something. Before he could, his body exploded.

By this time, the mist surrounding Meng Hao was beginning to dissipate. Meng Hao walked out. From the look of his robe and long hair, he seemed like a weak scholar. But the coldness in his eyes caused Zhou Jie to tremble.

More than ten Cultivators of the late Foundation Establishment stage... and only Meng Hao had emerged alive from the mist.

"Your excellency's methods are a bit too ruthless," said Zhou Jie, slowly lowering his hand. He knew that he had run out of time, and wouldn't be able to continue his work with the incense burner.

The Black Sieve Sect had completely misjudged Meng Hao's Cultivation



base.

Actually, Patriarch Violet Sieve had received information regarding Meng Hao's Cultivation base from the their Sect Elder who was currently in the Song Clan. He knew that his power exceeded that of the mid Foundation Establishment stage, and was more akin to the late Foundation Establishment stage.

However, Zhou Jie was now well aware that Meng Hao's battle power was not comparable to the late Foundation Establishment stage. In fact, it could exhibit terrifying pressure that exceeded such power.

After close observation just now, Zhou Jie got the powerful sense that his opponent's spiritual power was completely different from that of others. It looked like spiritual power, but it seemed to somehow be branded specifically to Meng Hao.

Logically speaking, the spiritual power of magical techniques with which Meng Hao attacked, should eventually dissipate back into Heaven and Earth. However, the power left over by Meng Hao's attacks did not dissolve away. Instead, they seemed to be rejected by Heaven and Earth. They just floated there like oil on water.

It seemed that the explosiveness of this rejected power was one of the reasons Meng Hao was so powerful. Zhou Jie reached these conclusions quickly, but couldn't figure out any solution to the problem. Fear filled his heart.

Because of this explosiveness, Meng Hao might be only at the mid Foundation Establishment stage, but decimating the late Foundation Establishment stage was as easy for him as crushing dry weeds and smashing rotten wood. That... was obvious!

Meng Hao's spiritual power was different. It belonged only to him. The spiritual energy of others belonged to Heaven and Earth. By practicing breathing techniques, Cultivators could borrow it. Based on the various stages of Cultivation, the amount of time it could be borrowed varied. However, regardless of anything, all of the spiritual energy would once again return to Heaven and Earth upon death.

It was a cycle. Just like the nine paths in front of the gray-robed old man atop the world tree, it was a rule of Heaven and Earth.

“I’m actually not ruthless,” said Meng Hao indifferently, “you people are. Actually, I’m pretty softhearted. However, your presence here is a bit of a problem.” He waved his hand, causing the mist behind him to disperse fully. The rain descended onto the two of them, seemingly dividing them inseparably. However, their gazes locked, and their expressions grew more and more fierce.

“I am Zhou Jie, Dao Child of the Black Sieve Sect!” Zhou Jie suddenly lifted his hand. In it appeared a one foot long, blue-colored joss stick. The joss stick was lit, and smoke curled up from its end to form the shape of a sword that glowed mysteriously. This was clearly no ordinary joss stick.

“I am Meng Hao from the State of Zhao,” said Meng Hao coolly. His right hand flashed an incantation gesture, and the two wooden swords appeared and rotated around him slowly. They emanated glowing sword auras, and emitted a droning buzz that made seem as if they thirsted for blood.

This was not the first time Meng Hao had faced a Dao Child in battle. The first time was when he had fought Li Daoyi, and had forced him to flee, severing his arm in the process. Then he had encountered Li Shiqi, and had competed against her in demonstrations of strength. Now he was up against Zhou Jie.

“I had three Dao Pillars when I fought Li Daoyi,” Meng Hao thought. “I had four when I faced Li Shiqi. Now I have five. I will now prove that the power of my five Perfect Dao Pillars is invincible in the Foundation Establishment stage!” An exuberant gleam appeared in his eyes. The two wooden swords seemed as if they could sense Meng Hao’s desire for battle. Their droning grew even louder, and their sword auras gleamed even more brightly.

“You look just like a woman I met while traveling a few years ago. I pursued her, but nothing ever came of it. She wasn’t named Meng, though.” Zhou Jie shook his head. Actually, Meng Hao was a person who

he believed deserving of his respect. In truth, among the Foundation Establishment Cultivators of the Southern Domain, he had only ever respected about ten people. Each and every one of them was a Dao Child!

But today, he recognized Meng Hao's existence. Meng Hao was someone who could stand shoulder to shoulder with the current generation of Dao Children.

Even as the words left his mouth, Zhou Jie's body exploded with the power of the great circle of Foundation Establishment. It rippled out, causing his hair to fly about. The rainwater around him shot away from him, as if it didn't dare to touch him. A fierce look filled his eyes as he strode toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao's eyes flashed, and he too began to stride forward. His Spiritual Sense shot out.

Rain fell around them as this battle of those at the peak of the Foundation Establishment began!

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# Chapter 202: Confrontation of the Peaks!

The multiple layers of clouds overhead smashed into each other, and the sound of thunder shook the earth. Down below, Meng Hao and Zhou Xie strode toward each other. Their eyes locked, and the power of their Spiritual Sense rocketed forward.

An attack of Spiritual Sense is formless and invisible. In terms of killing potential, though, its power far exceeds that of magical items!

Mutually caught in each other's gazes, Meng Hao and Zhou Xie both began to tremble. Zhou Xie felt like he was being crushed by innumerable mountains. Blood oozed out from the corners of his mouth. He set his jaw, and a look of ferocity sprang up onto his face.

Meng Hao seemed affected too. He pursed his lips, however, and no blood appeared. He snorted coldly, and then continued to walk forward. As the step descended, both people once again trembled.

Zhou Jie's face was a bit pale. He could tell that he was not superior in terms of Spiritual Sense. Without hesitation, he retreated several paces, flashing an incantation gesture with his left hand. The foot long joss stick in his right hand immediately let off twisting strands of smoke which transformed into a curved blade that shot toward Meng Hao.

As the blade flew through the air, the smoke which comprised it began to spread out. Soon the outline of a figure could be seen. It appeared as if a person were holding the curved blade, chopping it directly toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao's eyes flickered. His left hand formed an incantation gesture, and the two seemingly eager wooden swords emitted an intense droning sound and then transformed into two beams of light which split the air as they sped toward the curved blade.

They arrived in an instant. There was no evasion, no twirling around. The two attacks seemed to be archenemies. They slammed into each other so powerfully, that it was clear one would be destroyed.

A boom echoed out, and Meng Hao waved both of his hands. It was as if there were invisible strings attaching the wooden swords to him; they immediately began to emit an intense sword aura that rippled out to filled the area. Everything started to shake. Who would possibly dare to approach?

A booming sounded out, and a strange look appeared in Zhou Jie's eyes. He lifted his left hand and waved it in front of him, then pressed down on the joss stick in his right hand. More smoke billowed out; in the blink of an eye, it transformed into more than ten weapons, each of them wielded by a phantom figure. All of them charged toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao's face was the same as ever as he looked at the approaching smoke phantoms. He lifted his hands, then extended them outward. The two wooden swords emitted explosive screeching sounds. Suddenly, all of the spiritual energy of Heaven and Earth seemed to rush toward them. The sword auras surrounding them expanded by thirty meters, and the swords themselves seemed to transform into two flying stegosauruses 1 which circled around Meng Hao.

A roaring sound echoed out from the approaching smoke phantoms as, one after another, they disintegrated, incapable of approaching Meng Hao.

"So you like defense," said Zhou Jie coolly. "I can help with that." A cold light shone in his eyes as his left hand flashed with another incantation gesture and then pressed up against the joss stick. It burned more furiously, and large quantities of smoke poured out. The smoke formed layers which expanded out in concentric rings.

Each new smoke ring was larger than the one before it. Soon, more more than a hundred rings had formed, which then shot toward Meng Hao. They spun around him, as if in an attempt to envelop him.

The smoke rings seemed about to swallow him up, and yet Meng Hao's expression didn't change in the least bit. He opened his mouth, and the lightning mist appeared. In the past, the lightning mist had absorbed Tribulation Lightning, as well as some of the will of the lightning in the square cauldron. At the moment, it seemed to be undergoing another

bizarre transformation. As it spread out, thunder crashed up above in the sky.

The lightning mist seemed to be affecting the clouds, causing them to congregate, as if lightning would begin to crash down at any moment. It seemed that the area outside of Meng Hao's lightning mist would soon become a sea of lightning!

The mist expanded, and then the lightning crashed down; roaring filled the sky. The instant the smoke rings were touched by the lightning, they exploded into fragments.

Zhou Jie's eyes narrowed. He had never expected such a tactic. Meng Hao walked forward, surrounded by the lightning mist.

The mist around him roiled, and thunderous booms filled the air. Incited by the lightning, the two wooden swords exploded with the vicious will of extermination. Meng Hao's hair whipped around his head and rain poured down around him. Anyone who saw him would be struck to the heart with a frightening, demonic sensation.

Suddenly, a domineering aura began to emanate from Meng Hao, the first time such an aura had appeared on him!

"Actually," said Meng Hao casually, "what I like best is attacking." He strode forward, seemingly filled with overwhelming power. He was like some sort of ancient wild beast, ready to conquer the world.

Zhou Jie's expression flickered as he suppressed the desire to retreat. Meng Hao now seemed completely different than he had been moments ago when he had been defending himself. He seemed to overflow with ferocity, as if he had previously been a sheathed sword... which had just been drawn!

It was time to display some skill!

One step, two steps, three steps.... With each step that Meng Hao took, thunder boomed even louder. Lightning filled the sky. The complete power of Meng Hao's Cultivation base exploded out, bolstered by his expanding Spiritual Sense. Zhou Jie was shocked, and he knew that he must not allow

Meng Hao to gather more momentum. If that happened, he would be very difficult to stop.

Just as Meng Hao's third step landed, Zhou Jie's eyes filled with determination. He loosened his right hand, and the joss stick, which was now little more than half a foot long, suddenly flew up.

Veins of blood shot through Zhou Jie's eyes as both hands flickered with an incantation gesture. He shoved his hands out in front of him.

"Green Smoke Exterminating the East Pass!" He spoke the words in conjunction with the outstretching of his hands. The joss stick ignited, burning a significant amount of its length to create a thick smoke which flew straight toward Meng Hao.

"Burst!" cried Zhou Jie. The thick smoke suddenly exploded outward. Everything in the area shook violently, and the noise from the explosion drowned out the sound of thunder. The smoke even covered up the lightning as it rippled out in greenish waves that carried deadly, exterminating power.

Meng Hao's body shook. The lightning mist around him quivered, and then simply burst apart under the strength of the attack. The two wooden swords fought against the incoming attack, and Meng Hao flew backward four or five paces. Blood seeped out from the corners of his mouth.

"It seems that Dao Children from the great Sects really are pretty badass...." Meng Hao took a deep breath, and his eye flickered. Zhou Jie stood there, his face somewhat pale. However, his eyes gleamed as he extended his hands forward in another incantation.

More of the joss stick burned away. Now, it was barely two inches long. Thick smoke roiled toward Meng Hao.

"Burst!" howled Zhou Jie, more lines of blood appearing in his eyes. Even as the smoke exploded out, Meng Hao lifted his right hand and struck it forward five times.

Black Sieve Five Strikes! 2

The five strikes were executed with extreme speed, and were completed

in the blink of an eye. As the exterminating smoke mist expanded out, an enormous hand appeared in front of Meng Hao. It shot directly toward the smoke.

An earth-shaking boom resonated out. All of the raindrops in the area exploded into minuscule drops of water. Meng Hao's eyes narrowed, and he shot backward a pace. His five Perfect Dao Pillars rotated, and made the five-strike attack over and over again.

One giant hand, two giant hands. In the blink of an eye, no less than ten giant hands appeared in front of Meng Hao. It was a frightening sight. All of the hands glowed with a golden light as they whistled through the air toward Zhou Jie.

Zhou Jie's eyes were nearly completely filled with blood. His hands flickered continuously with incantation gestures. The joss stick was now completely burned away. The smoke mist it created shot toward Meng Hao's incoming hand attacks. When they slammed into each other, a huge boom filled the air.

A gale force wind shot outward, and ripples emanated out in the air. The trees swayed backward, and the rainwater was transformed into a mist. Blood sprayed out of Meng Hao's mouth, and yet, his expression grew more fierce.

Zhou Jie staggered backward seven or eight steps, and, unable to control himself, coughed up a huge mouthful of blood. His face was pale, and yet his eyes gleamed brightly.

Neither of them spoke, as they stared at each other. Both of them knew that this battle... was far from over.

Zhou Jie had only used one magical item. He hadn't even employed any of the magical techniques of his Sect, nor any killing moves. Neither had Meng Hao.

They looked at each other for the space of three breaths, whereupon Zhou Jie lifted his head up to the sky and laughed. "The Great Black Clouds Palm! What a familiar magical technique! Brother Meng, since you know this technique, I think today would be a good opportunity to



exchange some pointers. Let me show you why the Black Sieve Sect's Great Black Clouds Palm is known by the moniker Black Clouds!" He lifted his right hand, and his breathing suddenly seemed to become strange and ragged. As his hand rose, illusory images appeared.

Each image was the shape of a hand. In total, twenty-six of them appeared. Zhou Jie's eyes narrowed, and he stretched his hand out toward Meng Hao.

"This is the true Great Black Clouds Palm!" As Zhou Jie's voice rang out, he struck forward, and an enormous hand appeared. It emitted a black glow, and as it formed it seemed to be composed of mist. This black mist was none other than the namesake black clouds!

The Black Clouds Palm screamed through the air toward Meng Hao, filling the area with a thunderous roar. Be it in terms of profundity or power, this attack vastly exceeded the incomplete version which Meng Hao had learned.

Meng Hao's eyes gleamed, but he said nothing. This was his personality; when engaged in magical battle, he would rarely speak. Everything he wanted to say was said in attacks. By not speaking, he increased the viciousness of those attacks.

He lifted his right hand and used his index finger to slice open a cut on his thumb. As the blood flowed out, everything in Meng Hao's eyes turned red.

1. By the way, the word for stegosaurus in Chinese could be literally translated as 'sword dragon' ←

2. This technique was learned by Meng Hao in Chapter 149: Killing Intent! and the following chapter, and was also used in Chapter 184: Seven Exterminations

# Chapter 203: I am Strong! I Shall Take My Stand!

Blood Immortal Legacy!

No face, no words; flames of war!

Broken clouds, a blood rain which rises to the heavens!

Send the spirit to the glorious devil tower!

Forge the bloodline of the spirits into the nine deaths! 1

These words contained magical powers. For the power to be unleashed required a sufficient Cultivation base, namely, Core Formation. Meng Hao was well aware that he was incapable of using it.

However, the Blood Finger, the Blood Palm and the Blood Death World, did not have a Cultivation base requirement. With sufficient spiritual energy, they could be unleashed. In addition to the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex, these were his killing moves.

Upon the path he trod to reach this day, Meng Hao had used the Blood Finger technique multiple times. It was clearly uniquely powerful, enough to shock anyone who saw it being used. The world in front of Meng Hao appeared to be red, which was a sign of the Blood Finger. Meng Hao had long since gotten used to this blood-red world. He looked at Zhou Jie, and the massive hand formed by the Black Sieve Sect's magical technique,

Great Black Clouds Palm. It screamed through the air toward him.

The hand itself seemed to be formed from black coloured mist, and yet it was also interlaced with a strange Qi. As the hand approached, it seemed to grow larger and larger. Meng Hao could imagine that soon it would fill his entire vision, and blot out the rest of the world.

It made him think back to the time in the State of Zhao when Lord Revelation had floated in the air above the Reliance Sect, and sent a palm strike down into the ground. At that time, he had been too weak to even struggle. The palm destroyed the Reliance Sect, and left a massive hand print in the earth.

But a red blur had appeared in the sky, like a sword that could sever Heaven and Earth. It split the hand in two, saving Meng Hao. In his mind, Meng Hao could see that massive hand descending upon him. 2

Of course, Zhou Jie couldn't even come close to comparing with Lord Revelation. And yet, the scene today was very reminiscent....

Meng Hao suddenly smiled, a wordless, soundless smile. He lifted his hand toward the incoming palm. The incoming palm attack grew closer and larger, kicking up a fierce wind which sent Meng Hao's clothes and hair whipping about....

Meng Hao lifted the thumb of his right hand, and then slashed it toward the incoming Great Black Clouds Palm.

This slash was like a flash of blinding light in the midst of pitch

blackness. It was a slash like the brightness seen when opening the eyes for the first time. This slash was just like the one the Demon Lord had used to sever Lord Revelation's palm attack. This slash... was evidence of the enlightenment Meng Hao had experienced underneath that massive palm in the Reliance Sect in State of Zhao!

I am strong! I shall take my stand!

A roaring boom filled the air. Meng Hao stood there, not moving a muscle. The massive incoming palm was a mere seven inches from him when a huge crack appeared, beginning at the top of the middle finger and snaking down all the way down through the gigantic palm. Then it split out, growing wider and wider. Meng Hao stood there calmly, safely, as the palm passed by. Wind screamed, buffeting his hair wildly. However, in the midst of the whipping hair, his eyes shined brightly. They were like sunlight in the dark of night. Anyone who caught sight of it would find the light... blinding!

"Do you want to keep going?" asked Meng Hao calmly, flicking his sleeve.

Zhou Jie stood there silently, looking at Meng Hao. Bitterness arose in his heart, but a moment later, the will to fight once again sparked to life in his eyes.

"Of course I want to keep going," he replied coolly. "From the moment I became Dao Child until now, I've never been defeated." He took a breath, waving his hand toward the incense burner off to the side. Instantly, the incense burner began to tremble. Cracks appeared on its surface, and popping sounds rang out as it collapsed into pieces. "No one should interfere with our fight now." His words were simple, and so were his

actions. However, this simplicity revealed incredible power, the power of a true expert. It was only the seed of power, but even that little bit caused Meng Hao's eyes to narrow.

"He's cut off his own path of retreat," thought Meng Hao. "With nowhere to run to, he can only rely on himself, and will be forced to utilize all of the power he can muster. This Zhou Jie really is an outstanding person.<sup>3</sup>" He nodded.

Zhou Jie lifted his hand and then pressed down onto his bag of holding. From within, five glittering strands of light emerged. Suddenly, the darkness around them disappeared as brilliant light filled the air. The bright light was emanated from what now hovered in front of Zhou Jie. Five glowing swords!

Five glittering swords, glowing with a variety of colors!

Zhou Jie reached out and extended his fingers. The five swords moved to his fingers, one hovering beneath each.

"Sieve Moon Mother Earth, Heaven Splitting Sword Formation!" Zhou Jie's hand pushed down toward the ground. As it did, the brightly glowing swords also shot down, and then disappeared.

The instant the swords disappeared, Meng Hao's pupils constricted, and he shot backward six paces.

Almost simultaneously, the five swords suddenly reappeared out of thin air. They shot upward, heading directly toward Meng Hao, who was still in

the midst of retreating.

The glittering light they emitted was dazzling as they screamed through the air. They were winding beams that were instantly upon Meng Hao, their sword auras billowing up to the sky. The sword Qi seemed to have locked Meng Hao up tightly; death surrounded him in all directions.

“Interesting,” said Meng Hao, his eyes narrowing. He lifted the thumb of his right hand and waved it toward the five swords.

A boom filled the air, and suddenly a blood-colored shield surrounded Meng Hao, thirty meters in each direction. The five swords slammed into the shield, causing a massive roar to echo out.

Zhou Jie coughed up some blood and then flickered in an incantation with both hands. The five swords emitted a shrill screaming sound. A flash of light burst out, and the five swords turned into twenty five swords!

The swords filled the air as they shot once again toward Meng Hao. Their intense power caused Meng Hao to be filled with a sense of life-or-death danger.

However, his expression remained the same as ever. As the twenty five swords shot toward him, he flicked his sleeve. The power of his Cultivation base roiled out. He slashed his index finger with his thumb causing blood to pour out. Using the power of two Blood Fingers, he gestured up into the air.

Boom!

The massive explosion was enough to distort one's vision. Everything in the area seemed to twist. The twenty five swords were blocked. Zhou Jie let out a howl. He pushed his hands against his chest, and veins popped out on his face. The twenty five swords flew up into the sky, and in an instant, transformed. One hundred and twenty five swords now filled the sky. From all directions, they descended upon Meng Hao.

They slammed into the glowing blood shield, which distorted and began to retract. In the blink of an eye, it had shrunk by nearly ten meters. Nearly half of the swords passed through it, pressing on toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao took a deep breath and slashed a third and fourth finger. Four fingers were now filled with the power of the Blood Immortal Legacy. The glow of blood filled the air as Meng Hao slashed the fifth finger!

The five fingers were covered in blood, forming the shape of a bloody handprint. This was the second of the three Legacy techniques, which contained power exceeding the Blood Finger. This was... the Blood Palm!

The Blood Palm appeared, filling the sky with a shocking roar. A massive blood-colored palm magically coalesced above Meng Hao's hand. He waved his hand, and the bright red, bloody glow spread out, sweeping through the sword formation and causing the more than one hundred glittering swords to tremble and fly backward. Meng Hao took a step forward, waving his hand once again.

A roaring sound could be heard as the space three hundred meters surrounding Meng Hao suddenly was filled with the image of an

enormous, blood-colored hand. Meng Hao stood at its very center. The massive hand shot into the air, then clenched into a fist.

Zhou Jie's face twisted. He coughed up more blood and rapidly flashed some incantation gestures in an attempt to regather his glittering swords. Instead, his face drained of blood.

The more than one hundred swords were apparently under the control of the massive clenched fist. They struggled as if they wished to free themselves, but were unable to.

Thirty of the swords trembled so violently that they eventually let out plaintive whines and collapsed into pieces.

Meng Hao snorted coldly. Roaring filled the air as thirty more flying swords disintegrated, and then another thirty. Finally, another thirty....

In the space of a few breaths, all of the flying swords were shattered to pieces by the massive clenched fist. The blood-colored hand slowly disappeared. As it did, five glittering, crack-filled swords appeared in front of Meng Hao.

"I have one last technique!" said Zhou Jie through clenched teeth. His eyes were crimson as Meng Hao waved his hand, sending the five glittering swords into his bag of holding.

"Black Sieve, Immortal Subjugation!" howled Zhou Jie. His left hand pushed down on the space between his eyebrows. At the same time, he waved his right hand. Instantly, dozens of jade slips flew out. Cracking



sounds filled the air as each and every one cracked into pieces. A sweet, beautiful aroma filled the air. However, it quickly turned into a disgusting odor which made one wish to vomit out their internal organs.

Suddenly, a Qi filled the entire area, which seemed to belong to Zhou Jie...

Meng Hao's eyes flickered. Suddenly, the archaic voice from the Demon Sealing Jade echoed in his mind.

"A hosts of evil spirits which call themselves Immortals (仙). But why fear a man (人) and a mountain (山)? If you encounter them, seal them immediately!" 4

Meng Hao was used to the sudden appearance of the voice in his mind. He looked over at Zhou Jie, sensing the increasingly powerful Qi which radiated out from him. Zhou Jie's twisted face no longer looked handsome. Instead, it seemed as if countless faces of others were flickering atop his own.

Anguish filled Zhou Jie's face, and it appeared as if he couldn't hold on much longer. Slowly, the life began to drain away, and his face began to grow dark. It turned out this technique could not be used by someone of the Foundation Establishment stage, not even...

A Dao Child!

"Demon Sealing, Eighth Hex!" Meng Hao slowly lifted his hand. A Qi suddenly began to emanate from him that outsiders would not notice, but

was absolutely visible to the countless bizarre spirits which were currently pouring into Zhou Jie.

The legion of faces which hovered on top of Zhou Jie's face, one and all, filled with expressions of terror...

\*

1. These words first appeared in Chapter: 37: 10th Patriarch of the Wang Clan. Please don't memorize these lines, because I may go back later to adjust them....
2. The events with Lord Revelation happened in Chapter 93: Sever the Dao, Change Heaven and Earth, Demonic Will!
3. This is a slight play on words, because the "jie" character in Zhou Jie's name means "outstanding".
4. As you should be able to see by looking closely, the character for Immortal is made up of the character for "person" and "mountain." In this passage, the voice is kind of making fun of these spirits which claim the title "Immortal." There was an analysis of the character "Immortal" in Chapter 118: Without Entering Mount Heaven, Immortal Ascension is Impossible,

# Chapter 204: The League of Demon Sealers!

## Demon Sealing, Eighth Hex!

This was the only technique among the Demon Sealing Sect's magic that Meng Hao had truly mastered. You might even say that it was not a magical technique, but a divine ability!

Every generation of Demon Sealers must create a new hex, and this one was created by the Eighth Generation Demon Sealer. As the Ninth Generation Demon Sealer, Meng Hao should have been prepared to face everything. However, Patriarch Reliance had ruined everything. Had it not been for a host of coincidences, as well as luck, Meng Hao would never have been able to learn the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex.

He took a deep breath and lowered his right hand. Ghost images appeared of everything in sight. Meng Hao's body trembled, and the world shook. Everything folded in onto Zhou Jie, causing countless ghost images to appear around him.

All of this takes some time to describe, but in fact happened in an instant. The ghost images began to vanish. Miserable screams echoed out from Zhou Jie; the voices did not belong to him, but rather the spirits which had entered his body.

Zhou Jie's body trembled, and his eyes were filled with confusion. Streams of black Qi drifted out from his body. They were extremely dense, and within the Qi could be seen nine phantoms, images of old men with

faces twisted in insanity and horror. They glared at Meng Hao.

No observer would be able to see these images... neither could they hear... the blood-curdling shrieks!

Meng Hao was the only one who could see or hear any of it. He was the Ninth Generation Demon Sealer, and despite having not yet fully realized his potential, his drop of blood had already confirmed his identity as the Ninth Generation. That was irrefutable.

Therefore, he could see these things.

The phantom spirits screamed miserably and then began to speak.

“The League of Demon Sealers, you’re the Ninth Generation....”

“The day our Dao was realized, you Demon Sealers blocked us, refined us, preventing us from becoming Demons!”

“Who cares about the League of Demon Sealers? They’ll become like us eventually, broken spirits of Heaven and Earth!”

As their words echoed out, their bodies began to tremble, and their screams grew more intense. The black Qi around them began to dissipate, and they began to be absorbed into the ground. Their figures grew indistinct and then began to disappear.

Meng Hao watched on thoughtfully. He didn’t know much about the

League of Demon Sealers; he was gradually learning along the way. Looking at the broken spirits had caused a coldness to flash through his eyes. He waved his right hand.

As he did, the broken spirits vanished. Their dying cries echoed into Meng Hao's ears.

"Shatter the League of Demon Sealers! Lord Ji has replaced the Heavens and forged the Immortal Sealing Dais. We struggled to become Immortal, and then died. What of it? Your League prevented us from achieving our Dao. Just wait until things change, then see which of the countless broken spirits in Heaven and Earth will devour you!!"

As the sound of the voices continued to echo out, Zhou Jie's pale face began to recover its complexion. His eyes were still filled with confusion.

Meng Hao glanced at him thoughtfully for a moment, then turned with the flick of a sleeve and began to walk off into the rain.

Zhou Jie watched Meng Hao's figure disappearing. He took a deep breath, and then clasped hands and bowed deeply.

"Next time we fight," he said under his breath, "I won't kill you, even if I win. I will repay your kindness, and prove the determination of my Cultivation." Then he turned weakly, disappearing into a beam of light.

Meanwhile, deep in a limestone cave in the Hundred Thousand Mountains of the Black Sieve Sect.... The moment the broken spirits died, furious howls could be heard. Although they echoed up into the sky, not a

single Black Sieve Sect disciple could hear them.

“The League of Demon Sealers! He’s of the League of Demon Sealers!!”

“Damn those Demon Sealers, each and every generation! Lord Ji fears them, and cursed the Ninth Generation Demon Sealer to die! This is the Ninth Generation....”

“Death, death, death.... The League of Demon Sealers must die! Every generation!!”

“The Immortal Sealing Dais lacks only the spirit of a Demon Sealer. Find him! Snatch his spirit and drink his blood to gain an Immortal body!!”

As the howls rang out, the entirety of the Hundred Thousand Mountains suddenly shook. The mountains shook, the ground shook, as if the spirit of the mountains was aroused. Streams of black Qi drifted up, causing the sky to grow dark.

However, at the very moment in which the streams of black Qi were about to shoot out, the corpse which had fallen from the sky to land near the Southern Domain’s Rebirth Cave, suddenly shook 1. As it shook, Qi emerged from it, a Qi not visible to any living person. It instantly spread out throughout the Southern Domain, filling it with terrifying force.

This terrifying force caused the broken spirits beneath the Hundred Thousand Mountains to tremble. Everything grew silent.

“Who are you!?” Amidst the deathly silence, a powerful Qi exploded out

from deep beneath the Hundred Thousand Mountains. It seemed powerful enough to cause the corpse to tremble. When the other broken spirits saw it, they prostrated themselves as if this Qi was their sovereign.

The billowing Qi filled the sky above the Black Sieve Sect, covering the land for millions of kilometers in every direction. Everything became pitch black. The strangest thing was... no one could actually see this! To any onlooker, the sky was as blue as the deep blue sea!

The voice which responded was deep and archaic. "I came seeking destiny," it said. The sound echoed throughout the Hundred Thousand Mountains of the Black Sieve Sect, filled with the ancientness of countless years. It seemed... somewhat tired.

Within the exhaustion was a barely detectable... killing aura.

It seemed as if this person had lived a life of battle, had killed so many times that it was impossible to describe. The voice seemed to contain a shocking will.

"What do you want?!" said the sovereign-like Qi above the Black Sieve Sect.

"Destiny comes and destiny goes. The Dao will always exist. This kid has destiny. If you interfere, I will abandon rebirth, change my plans, and instead slaughter all of you."

The sovereign-like Qi said nothing. After some time passed, it faded away. As it did, a haughty voice rang out.

“There’s no need to change your plans. We will come for you! Select thirty Chosen from the Black Sieve Sect and send them to our Black Netherworld Cave! We will return to the mortal world!”

Meanwhile... deep in the recesses of the Rebirth Cave, was a corpse. It was not the corpse of a human, but rather, a fish. It was a small fish, about the size of a hand.

The place where the fish’s eyes once had been suddenly began to burn with a netherworldly fire.

Next, deep beneath the Milky Way Sea, the long rope stretched along the seafloor toward the wooden coffin that rested amidst the massive formation of stones 2. A scratching sound could be heard, as if someone was inside the coffin, scratching the lid with their fingernails.

A raspy voice sounded out: “League of Demon Sealers....” The voice was filled with melancholy, and reminiscence. The words drifted slowly up, causing a violent storm to break out on the surface of the Milky Way Sea.

\*

Note from Er Gen: This chapter is about 1000 characters short. However, all the details have been spelled out. You could say that this chapter is sort of a wrap-up. More exciting chapters are coming up! I really need to take some time to plan for Book 3. Book 3 will be the best I’ve written so far!



# Credits

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